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EDITORIAL

MURDER BY PROXIES

The Reagan message to the right-wing killers in El Salvador is "Go ahead and win." Does this amount to "another Vietnam"? "No!" exclaimed Carlos Fuentes at a symposium on El Salvador co-sponsored by The Nation Institute at the New School in New York City on April 14. "It's another Latin America." But this time the old U.S. habit of intervention in Central America, of failing to "give us a chance," as the distinguished Mexican novelist and diplomat put it, is dressed up in the *macho* language of East-West confrontation.

There are indeed areas of the world where East and West confront each other, but Central America is not such a place. Enter proxies. Cuba is alleged to be Russia's proxy. But Castro has been so unhelpful to the left in Panama, Nicaragua and now El Salvador that he has clearly not had Moscow's blessing.

As for America's proxies in the Reagan era, they are the juntas and oligarchs. As one speaker at the symposium recalled, "pacification by proxy" was the first step in the Vietnam process. Pacification in El Salvador means "door-to-door" murders at night, as *Nation* contributor Anne Nelson put it in her report on the death squads' productivity increase since we resumed "nonlethal" and then lethal aid.

Bipolarity is the villain in Central America. The solution begins with hands off by the U.S.A., and allowing multipolarity and homegrown institutions to develop. Down with the "fictitious fulcrum" of the East-West square-off, in Fuentes's phrase. Sound national strategy joins simple morality in arguing for leaving Central America to work out its own destiny. The situation is grave enough for Americans to go back to demonstrating. On May 3, there's a March on the Pentagon sponsored by the People's Anti-War Mobilization.

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Daniel Singer

THE PRESS AND EL SALVADOR
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NATURAL-GAS DECONTROL

THE COMING CATASTROPHE

FRED J. COOK

There are 8,000 producing natural-gas reservoirs in the huge Tuscaloosa Trend that runs across Louisiana and Texas and into the Gulf of Mexico. "These wells are paying for themselves in three or four months," says Dr. Paul H. Jones of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, a geologist who is the foremost expert on the area. "After that, the principal expense to the drillers [during the twenty or more years the wells will continue to produce] is the payment of a 25 percent royalty fee to the landowners on whose property the gas has been discovered. I know personally of three cases in which the landowners—each owned large tracts, of course—are getting $5 million a month in royalties."

Gas from many of these deep, unregulated wells is selling at $7.56 a thousand cubic feet, compared with about $2.37 on "old," or shallower, wells. As might be expected, production is being held back on the old wells, and enormous volumes of $7.56 gas are being "rolled in" to the overall stream, shocking homeowners with ever higher heating bills.

It is a practice that is now being challenged for the first time in protests filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The cities of Richmond and Charlottesville in Virginia, which own their own distribution systems, have filed a complaint against the high prices being charged by the Columbia Gas Transportation Corporation due to its purchases of costlier Louisiana gas. The basis of their allegation is that Columbia is paying more to its suppliers than necessary, when the Appalachian region is practically afloat with cheaper gas from nearby, shallower wells.

Similar protests against Transco have been

(Continued on Page 493)

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LETTERS.

STATE TERRORISM

Philadelphia

Your editorial on "The Worst Yet" [*The Nation*, Feb. 21], referring to the appointment of Ernest Lefever, and dealing with terrorism and the human rights issue, concedes more than half the game to Lefever-Haig, et al., for no good reasons whatsoever and in contradiction of *Nation* articles and editorial positions over many years. The analysis of terrorism is reminiscent of that of Walter Laqueur, Lefever's colleague at Georgetown, whose biases are in the Lefever mold, but who favors imperialism with a human face. His first tactic is to confine the concept of terrorism to the violence of individuals or marginal groups, excluding that of states, although in its dictionary usage terrorism refers to "intimidation by the systematic use of violence," implicitly encompassing the state. The editorial follows this conventional pattern—terror is strictly retail; governments are not "terrorists." A second tactic, especially beloved by Jeane Kirkpatrick, is to make the government strictly responsive, deliberately provoked by terrorists, who *want* state violence and benefit from it. *The Nation* editorialist obliges here too: "one of its central purposes is to provoke a country's rulers," etc.; "It is exactly such practices that terrorists welcome."

Speaking generously, these are misleading half-truths—valid in a few special cases, but mainly false, and playing down the more basic fact that retail terrorism is usually a response to egregious exploitation and state violence. In crucially important cases like Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala and Vietnam in the 1950s, among many others, retail terror followed and was elicited by wholesale terror. In *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*, Noam Chomsky and I went to great lengths to show the functional role of state terror in creating conditions favorable to local and foreign elites; and we cited numerous church documents whose essence, expressed in one of 1977, is that "in order to impose the model of development which gives privileges to small minorities, it was necessary to create and maintain a repressive State which in turn provokes a situation of civil war." The same message is conveyed by Penny Lernoux in many *Nation* articles and in her magnificent *Cry of the People*, but it failed to reach the editorialist.

A third conservative gambit, again stated explicitly in the editorial, is that "terrorists resort to terrorism because they lack sufficient popular support to gain power through the ballot or through wars." This is amazing to read in *The Nation*—totally wrong, as the magazine pointed out many times in the past, in reference to the unheld elections of 1956 in Vietnam, and unaccountably neglecting the frequent absence of any democratic or peaceful options in states like Somoza's Nicaragua, where a unified populace still had difficulty in displacing a brutal dictator supported to the hilt by the United States.

The Lefever appointment *The Nation* commendably opposes. The supporting remarks on terrorism, and the recommended proper responses of the "governments" victimized by "terrorists" inadvertently fail to identify the primary locus of terrorism in, say, El Salvador and Guatemala, and thus undermine any serious opposition to terror.

Edward Herman

REPLY

Mr. Herman suggests, without quite saying so, that terrorism (antigovernment) is justified by terrorism (government). It is not a view we share any more than if the order of the words in parentheses were reversed. The point of the editorial, not addressed by Herman, was that there are pragmatic as well as principled grounds for condemning Alexander Haig's policy of support for governments that abuse human rights under the guise of combating terrorism. The policy is self-defeating as terrorists (antigovernment) are often intent on getting their opponents to discredit themselves by resorting to terror (government). —*The Editors*

THE MEDIA AND T.M.I.

Prosperity, Pa.

With regard to Ernest Sternglass's well-researched and -documented two-part article on Three Mile Island, I thought you should be aware of a news report aired during the week of March 16, on Pittsburgh's KDKA-TV evening *Eyewitness News* broadcast, to the effect that the state's health department found no increase in the infant mortality rate due to the March 1979 accident.

According to the report, the statistics for the affected area showed a nineteen per 1,000 death rate among infants in the first six months of that year, and a drop to twelve or thirteen per 1,000 during the last six-month period. This is supposed to prove that radioactive releases had no ill effect whatsoever, as health department officials assure us deaths due to fallout wouldn't show up until months after the fact.

I question their conclusion and find it bears out the Sternglass implication of a nuclear industry-backed government cover-up. My wrath, however, is reserved for the incomplete reporting job done by a network news station which exercises a great deal of influence upon how the public at large perceives issues and events with a major quality-of-life impact. *Dale Elizabeth Walker*

An editorial on the subject by Ernest J. Sternglass appears on page 485.

—*The Editors*

OPPENHEIMER AND THE BOMB

San Francisco

Robert Hatch has missed the point of Jon Else's documentary "The Day After Trinity" [Films, *The Nation*, Feb. 14]. . . .

Unlike Hatch who complains that the film "teaches us so little," I believe Else has chosen to underscore one of the most unsettling lessons of our time. The film demonstrates that the United States Government was never unaware of Dr. Oppenheimer's flirtation with Marxism, his associations with known Communists, his friendships and political passions. When the Manhattan Project required a personality combining the administrative genius, scientific sophistication and personal charisma that would hold together the disparate personalities who worked to create the atomic bomb, they chose Oppenheimer because he was clearly the one person who could bring off so mammoth an effort in the limited time available.

Only when Oppenheimer grew apprehensive of our use of the bomb, and urged limitation on production of even greater destructive weapons, only then did the Government find it necessary to destroy him. The cynicism of the United States Government in its martyrdom of this great and noble man is starkly retold by Else, without editorializing. The viewer leaves the theater uneasy. Can we forget that history demonstrates that once weapons have been produced, governments somehow use them? Was there ever a justification for Nagasaki?

Florence D. Mischel

CORRECTIONS

The study cited in *The Nation*'s March 28 article "The Kirkpatrick Doctrine for Latin America" by Penny Lernoux should have been credited to two students at the New York University Graduate Department of Journalism, Ivna Gusmao and Alan Benjamin. [See Cynthia Brown and Fernando Moreno, "Force-Feeding the Press in El Salvador," on page 487.]

Inadvertently, the meaning was altered in a key paragraph of Jerold S. Auerbach's review of *The Enigma of Felix Frankfurter* ["'His Father and His Face,'" *The Nation*, April 11]. The passage should have read:

"Even before Frankfurter was appointed to the Supreme Court, he was the most powerful and conspicuous American court Jew in this century. But the court Jew always was tormented by apprehension and conflict as he moved beyond his community into hostile territory. So he found uneasy solace in the trappings of privilege and the symbols of courtly life. Frankfurter, struggling to elude 'his father and his face,' adopted Holmes and Roosevelt as his gods and worshipped at the altar of law and patriotism."

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EDITORIALS.

The Muddle Way

The British social democrats have chosen a peculiar time to inaugurate their new party. If they agree on one single proposition (which is dubious), it is that class politics is a bad thing. Shirley Williams, former education minister and the only one of them with anything approaching charisma, says repeatedly that "we must get away from class." Yet class, never an easily escapable issue in British life, is not only surviving but intensifying as a problem.

When Benjamin Disraeli wrote his novel *Sybil* he described Britain as a country containing "Two Nations." In the century that has elapsed since then, it has been the shared objective of all major parties to reduce the gap between the two. Especially in the postwar period, standards of education, health and housing have come to depend less and less on the original social status of the recipient. But, in the last few years, all that has changed. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's policy for the revival of British industry depends on an unashamed transfer of resources from the poor to the rich (known as "incentives" in the quaint jargon of our time). The poor are to be given incentives too—chief among them the fear of the scrapheap.

At least three million people, or 10 percent of the work force, are now unemployed and the figure is climbing steadily. Old regional disparities, between Wales and Scotland, the industrial Northeast and Northwest, are reappearing. School meal programs have been reduced. Hospital construction has been cut back, and some hospitals have actually been closed. More and more, the middle class is making private arrangements for schooling and health. At the very bottom of the heap are the black and brown Commonwealth immigrants and the inhabitants of Northern Ireland, some of whose communities have more than 50 percent unemployment. This is, in short, no time to be "getting away" from class.

Yet the Social Democratic Party has touched a chord in

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public opinion. Faced with a choice between the bovine reactionaries in Thatcher's Cabinet and the aging hacks in the leadership of the Labor Party, many people welcome the idea of a new allegiance. And the British love of compromise and the "middle way" is amply catered to by the new grouping as well.

It must worry the novice party that its most enthusiastic support has come from the enemies of Labor. At the next election, the extent of its polling will, in Britain's winner-take-all system, probably benefit the Conservatives most. Many of its backers and leading members are disappointed mediocrities from previous Labor governments who have declared openly for the fellow-traveling right. The very term "social democratic," which derives from the Euro-Marxist tradition, has now come to mean well-heeled intellectuals with a taste for office. There is a slight lack of combat experience among the leading British cadres, most of whom have been accustomed to comfortable seats at the top table for decades past. They do not seem to address the vast new underclass that is being created in the kingdom—among whom are blacks in the Brixton section of London, who exploded in an anti-police riot the weekend before last.

In many ways, Britain has been governed by the "moderate center" since the war. That consensus has now been exhausted by a series of poor governments, leading the Tories to adopt supply-side policy and Labor to fall back on veteran leftist nostrums. Such a polarization ought to be welcome—a serious test of strongly competing interpretations. The social democrats fear such a development, and want to remain on the safe ground of liberalism. That is why they will probably fail, and why they will deserve to do so.

Charity for All

When the Reagan economizers made huge cuts in Federal assistance to the arts, they explained that businesses and private philanthropy would make up the difference. In this spirit, we propose that the Republican Party organize a charitable effort by the private sector to help all the "truly needy." Although strict constructionist free enterprise doctrine argues against business performing eleemosynary acts, we believe that a suitable package of tax credits can make such donations palatable to the stockholders.

What really encourages us to look to the private sector for help in easing the social pain of budgetary constraints is the President's record so far as a fund-raiser. He has already conducted successful drives to pay for the inauguration, to underwrite his transition staff and to renovate his family quarters in the White House with private funds. The renovation project pulled in $375,000 alone—88 percent more than the goal of $200,000. Most of the money, said Peter McCoy, Nancy Reagan's chief of staff, "came from foundations," which had "absolutely no political interests." Very commendable, we thought at the time; only why did the White House refuse to release the names of any of the donors? Then there was the heartening response to the Coalition for a New Beginning, headed by Presidential pal Justin Dart, which raised $800,000 from a number of corporations. This noble organization, reportedly suggested by budget director David Stockman, was to have engaged in a stimulating educational effort in support of the President's fiscal program. When small-minded gossips questioned the sticky issue of White House involvement in a lobbying drive funded by big business, the effort was hastily scuttled.

Despite the difficulties posed by conflict-of-interest red tape, we hope that the Reagan charitable efforts move ahead. Our colleague Frank Donner has suggested several tasteful and suitable fund-raising events along this line:

§ A national cake sale for people whose unemployment checks have run out, conducted like a Pillsbury Bakeoff, with G.O.P. mesdames vying to contribute their finest productions, inspired by the slogan, "Bake a Cake for the Gipper."

§ A public-education lottery for the auto industry with Jerry Lewis as emcee and poster child Lee Iacocca as special guest.

§ A national raffle with three grand prizes: an all-expenses-paid trip to Chile; an hour's free consultation with Milton Friedman; and the personal blessing of the Rev. Jerry Falwell.

§ A chain of resale shops for the suburban needy to be called the David Stockman Thrift Shoppes. They would sell to the ill clothed the finest in second-hand three-piece suits, leisure suits, designer jeans and fur coats. In each garment will be a tag reading "Dave Stockman's Thrift Makes You Dress Like a Republican, Even if You Can't Live Like One."

§ For the urban deserving poor: G.O.P. Bingo. Winners will be paid in surplus food stamps.

Lillie Shultz

Lillie Shultz, who died last week after a long and painful illness, was an integral part of the regime that guided *The Nation* through the war years and the immediate postwar era. It was *The Nation* of Freda Kirchwey, Alvarez del Vayo, Lillie and, for much of the time, Carey McWilliams. If Freda, a great humanitarian and pacesetter for many of the civil rights crusades that continue today, was the cool helmsman of the publication, Lillie was its dynamo—a tireless bundle of energy who contributed to policy, kept staff morale at fighting pitch and, most of all, exercised a talent for raising the money necessary to keep the magazine afloat.

Lillie had two passions: *The Nation* and Israel. They were in many ways complementary passions. The one was directed at maintaining the life and vigor of a great ideal; the other at turning an old ideal into reality. *The Nation* owes her a great debt for her services during so many critical hours, and there are many in Israel who must feel equally in her debt. But to these institutional memorials to a gallant and fighting soul one must add another: the love and admiration borne her by her working colleagues. We mourn her death.

VICTOR H. BERNSTEIN

Victor H. Bernstein was managing editor of this magazine during much of the period that Lillie Shultz worked here.

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T.M.I. Update

Just one week before the second anniversary of the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island, Dr. George Tokuhata, director of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Epidemiological Research, announced, according to a March 20 story by United Press International, that "final figures now indicate that there had been no rise in the infant mortality rate in the ten-mile radius of the plant."

A closer look at the data casts serious doubt on Dr. Tokuhata's comforting conclusion. A key support for it was his finding that the infant mortality rate within a ten-mile radius of the plant was the same—19.3 deaths per thousand live births—in the three-month period after the accident on March 28, 1979, as it was in the January-March period just before it.

This comparison is misleading, however. January, February and March are winter months, when babies are more vulnerable to infectious diseases like influenza and pneumonia, and to diarrhea. Consequently, the infant mortality rate during these months is generally higher than during the spring and the summer. And indeed Dr. Tokuhata's own tables show this was the case for the ten-mile zone around T.M.I. during the previous years.

In 1978, the infant mortality rate was 14.0 in the first quarter and declined to only 9.8 in the spring; a similar decline had taken place in 1977—from a high of 14.7 in the winter quarter to 11.7 in the spring. The point is that the normal spring decline in babies' deaths did not occur after the accident in March. This contradicts Dr. Tokuhata's claim that "there is no evidence that radiation from the nuclear power plant influenced the rise or fall of death statistics."

Indeed, other evidence in the report suggests that radioactive iodine-131 released in a gas cloud after the accident did affect the infant mortality rate. The most striking indication is the fact that the southern portion of Harrisburg, which, according to the power company's own monitoring devices, received the most intense radioactivity, showed the greatest increase in infant deaths in the entire ten-mile radius. [See Sternglass, "The First Casualty at T.M.I.," *The Nation*, February 28, and "The Lethal Path of T.M.I. Fallout," *The Nation,* March 7.] According to Dr. Tokuhata's report, infant mortality in this area was 29.7 per thousand live births in the three months after the accident. In April, May and June of 1977 it was only 8.1; in 1978, it was 11.5. Thus, there was a rise of 158 percent between 1978 and 1979, and 267 percent between 1977 and 1979. In contrast, the infant mortality rate for Pennsylvania rose much less than it did in the ten-mile radius around T.M.I., suggesting that the Harrisburg rise was related to the accident.

Table 4 of the state's report also shows a marked rise in the number of neonatal deaths—babies who die in the first twenty-eight days after birth. Typically, such infants are born underweight and are much more likely to be physically and mentally retarded, an effect that is produced by, among other things, damage to the thyroid gland. Iodine-131 taken into the body tends to concentrate in this gland, so there is a strong probability that the rise in neonatal deaths resulted from the babies' mothers' exposure to iodine-131. The figures show that in the most heavily exposed area of southern Harrisburg, neonatal deaths during April, May and June rose progressively from none in 1977 to 7.6 in 1978, to 29.7 in 1979—a rise of 290 percent in the last year. Both infant mortality rates and neonatal deaths were higher in southern Harrisburg during the three-month period after the accident than in the state as a whole and in upstate New York, where radiation exposure was less.

As for the reason why infant mortality rates in the ten-mile radius around T.M.I. were higher than elsewhere in the state before the accident, the figures for nearby Maryland provide a clue. Milk produced in the area between the Three Mile Island plant and the reactors at Peach Bottom, Pennsylvania, forty miles to the south along the Susquehanna River, is shipped all over southern Maryland. The Susquehanna River also supplies drinking water to southern Maryland. Before 1974, when the large reactors went into operation, the infant mortality rate in Baltimore was falling, as it was elsewhere in the nation. But after the two plants began releasing radioactive iodine, strontium and cesium into the air and water of the river and Chesapeake Bay, infant mortality rates dramatically reversed their downward trend. After reaching an all-time low of only 37 deaths in July 1974, or 8.7 per thousand, the rate climbed to 16.4 in July 1978, and then shot up to a ten-year high of 124 deaths—29.0 per thousand births—in July 1980.

The recent report is only the latest of a series of misleading statistics and unexplained omissions from Dr. Tokuhata's office. First, there was the discovery of an "error" in the U.S. Vital Statistics for July 1979. The number of infant deaths in Pennsylvania was revised downward from the original 271 to 185. This "correction" brought the Pennsylvania rate down from the highest in the entire Eastern United States to the national average. Then the Pennsylvania Department of Health failed to report a sharp increase in hypothyroidism among newborn babies near the T.M.I. plant. The department also did not make post-accident studies of the concentration of iodine-131 in the thyroid glands of animals and stillborn infants and in newborn infants who died shortly after birth. This is the most sensitive test of possible deleterious effects and is recommended by most health experts. Nor did the Health Department release early data showing a sevenfold rise in infant mortality rates within a five-mile radius of the plant in the six months after the accident over the previous year.

A preliminary report on the infant mortality rate within ten miles of the T.M.I. plant issued by the state Health Department in April 1980 was flawed by a series of internal inconsistencies and errors, which served to reduce the number of deaths reported. Still more recently, there was a strange and unprecedented seven-month delay in the publication of the state's annual vital statistics report for the year of the accident. When the report finally came out in February 1981, a key table listing congenital birth defects by county and city was omitted. So were detailed infant mor-

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tality, leukemia and cancer data for a number of cities, including the city of Aliquippa, located near the Shippingport and Beaver Valley reactors where infant deaths, cancers and leukemia had earlier risen to record heights following releases from the Shippingport nuclear plant.

Finally, the information on how many babies were born weighing under 1,500 grams was deleted from the annual report. This key information is needed to study the possible effects of radioactive iodine from the release of T.M.I., or the other large reactors in the state of Pennsylvania.

The pattern is clear. Two years after the T.M.I. accident, the nuclear industry and the state of Pennsylvania continue to mislead the public about its adverse effects on human health.

ERNEST J. STERNGLASS

Ernest J. Sternglass is professor of radiological physics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, department of radiology. He is also adjunct professor in the department of history and philosophy of science at Indiana University in Bloomington. He is the author of more than 100 articles on the physics of radiation, and of Low-Level Radiation *(Ballantine) and* Secret Fallout *(McGraw-Hill).*

ARTICLES.

THE FRENCH ELECTIONS

How the Left Is Helping to Re-elect Giscard

DANIEL SINGER

Paris

Suspense without passion is France's strange electoral mood for the moment. President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's advisers are both perturbed and fundamentally optimistic. They have begun to be worried because what once looked like a mismatch and a walkover is now presented by opinion polls as too close to call. If the President's men remain nevertheless confident—and if the Paris Bourse is still quietly indifferent—it is because they are all relying on the divisions of the left and on Communist tactics to insure Giscard d'Estaing's reelection. To put it bluntly, they are banking on Communist Party leader Georges Marchais.

In a country evenly split between left and right it may seem strange that the very idea of a conservative landslide was ever contemplated, what with the suicide of a minister involved in a land scandal and the disclosure of gifts of diamonds to Giscard d'Estaing by the bloody Emperor Bokassa throwing a sinister light on the Presidency. Diamonds, particularly when their awkward origin is splashed on the front page of *Le Monde*, are not a President's best friend, yet the real reasons for the political difficulties of Giscard d'Estaing lie deeper than scandal. After his narrow victory in 1974, Giscard d'Estaing could parade briefly as a champion of reform, lowering the voting age to 18, or liberalizing the antiquated anti-abortion laws. The illusion, however, did not last. The economic crisis rapidly revealed that, whatever his "centrist" disguise, Giscard d'Estaing's wallet was unquestionably on the right. Under his reign France has the greatest social inequality in Europe.

With a heavy deficit in foreign trade, double-digit inflation, some 1.7 million unemployed now and the prospect of 2.5 million in the not so distant future, the prospects were good for a Giscard d'Estaing defeat. Indeed, back in 1977 everything seemed set for a sweeping victory of the left in the parliamentary elections, until the Communists, presumably having grasped the gravity of the economic crisis, decided that serving as junior partners to the Socialists in the ruling coalition and having to keep "social peace" in the factories was not for them. The right thus had victory thrust upon it, and Giscard d'Estaing emerged as the apparently undisputed king.

Nothing fails like failure. While the Communists were slinging mud at their ex-partners and the Socialists were wondering whether to ditch their leader, François Mitterrand, in favor of newcomer Michel Rocard, the stock of the left dropped dramatically. Since their votes no longer seemed to matter, many left-wingers felt they could only express their disgust by voting for Coluche, the professional clown who is a bona fide candidate. The mood, however, altered when the Socialist candidate became credible again last November, after a series of parliamentary by-elections. In the second round, when the strongest candidates slug it out, the cohesion of respective coalitions is tested. Two significant trends emerged: the bulk of the Communist electorate voted for the left-wing candidate, whatever the party line, and, by the same token, some Gaullist voters switched to the Socialists rather than go with the *Giscardien.*

As a result, Mitterrand, ultimately picked by the Socialists as their champion, made a spectacular recovery in opinion polls. One began to wonder whether he might not benefit from the divisions of the left and from the Communist onslaught. According to some analysts, Communists would vote for him despite their party's insults, while undecided voters would because of them. When Mitterrand began to look like a potential winner, the Communists rallied to Giscard d'Estaing.

The issue of Communist seats in the French Government provides a handy test of their intentions. In 1974, when Mitterrand was the candidate of a united left and the Communists were doing their utmost to get him elected, they

Daniel Singer is a freelance writer born in Poland and based in Paris. He is the author of the recently published The Road to Gdansk *(Monthly Review Press).*

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unilaterally proclaimed that they wouldn't demand key ministries like defense, internal or foreign affairs, the very offices that Charles de Gaulle had said they should be denied. This year they have no such scruples. They are demanding that the stinking, reactionary Socialists tell them how many key seats they will get in the Cabinet. Their purpose is devious: to frighten away any middle-of-the-road voters who are tempted to vote for Mitterrand. Official propagandists did not miss the point; French television, which is very much His Master's Voice, played up the Communist ministers issue.

When this Red Peril did not work, Marchais redoubled his efforts. Last week he warned Frenchmen on television that the workers will not be fooled by Mitterrand's victory and will strike to get their due. Again, Georges Marchais's purpose was to scare as many potential Mitterrand supporters as he could.

Reduced to its bare essentials, the French electoral equation is not too complicated. Forget Caesar's dictum about Gaul being divided into three parts. France is split into two halves—the left and the right—each one again subdivided. Remember too that in the first ballot, to be held on April 26, when an absolute majority is required to be elected, Frenchmen can "pick and choose," i.e., express their preferences. In the second ballot, on May 10, when the field has been reduced to two, presumably Giscard d'Estaing and Mitterrand, Frenchmen "eliminate." In other words, they opt for the lesser evil and get rid of their favorite enemy.

In this situation, the Communist leaders will not ask their followers to vote for Giscard d'Estaing or even to abstain. A certain number of militants might be persuaded to vote for the enemy (it used to be called a "revolutionary vote for the right"), but the bulk of the electorate would neither understand nor follow such oblique counsels. What Marchais and his colleagues may really hope for is that when they pay ritual fealty to the "unity of the left," hundreds of thousands of their supporters, disaffected by four years of a violent campaign, will go fishing rather than vote for Mitterrand.

Against this one must set the contradictions of the other side. It is no secret here that Jacques Chirac, the ambitious neo-Gaullist leader, hopes that Giscard d'Estaing will be defeated by Mitterrand. Then in the parliamentary election that follows, Chirac can emerge as the savior of the right.

The main preoccupation of the Communists today is for Marchais not to fall too far behind Mitterrand in the first ballot. Throughout the postwar period, Communists were electorally stronger than the Socialists. Then, under Mitterrand, the Socialists gained the upper hand. The difference between them, however, has remained small. What the Communists are frightened of is the opening of the gap, with Mitterrand getting, say, more than 25 percent of the vote and Marchais less than 20 percent. As to the second ballot, though they have no love for Giscard d'Estaing, they are keen on seeing Mitterrand defeated. Thus, a conservative monarch anointed by "Communists."

The very description of this electoral *nouvelle cuisine* explains why there is still no passion despite the suspense. The French left is badly divided, without even the semblance of a program, and no longer the bearer of high hopes. The illusions have vanished. Few Frenchmen nowadays think that their lives will be fundamentally altered by a miracle at the polls. But after twenty-three years of uninterrupted conservative rule, a Mitterrand victory would unloosen things, open up prospects, offer some opportunities. It might prepare the ground for some genuine change and this in itself is worth the voters' support. □

THE MISSED STORY

Force-Feeding The Press in El Salvador

CYNTHIA BROWN AND FERNANDO MORENO

José (Tony) Barreto is a 32-year-old Puerto Rican from Philadelphia who visited El Salvador this January as a tourist, in search of his Latin roots. When he asked for permission to photograph a National Guardsman for the folks back home, he was promptly arrested, and in the week of interrogation that followed, the most frequently asked question was: Are you a journalist?

When Amnesty International issued a statement last March denouncing Salvadoran soldiers' killings of thousands of peasants, *The New York Times* ran an article describing the statement as one "which denounces repression against leftist terrorists." It focused on a junta member's rebuttal.

The above examples illustrate why Americans have little chance of understanding the situation in El Salvador from the news they get. The repression of journalists covering the war and a U.S. media attitude that is often glaringly biased have resulted in coverage even more superficial and arrogant than Third World issues usually receive. The developing military and political situation, human rights, refugees and rural conditions—Americans can hardly make balanced judgments on these with the information the networks and major newspapers generally give them.

Tony Barreto's story parodies the ugly fact that, like 13,000 Salvadorans killed since January 1980 and more than 600,000 refugees and displaced persons, newspeople have become war casualties in unusually high numbers. There are, of course, the normal hazards of war, such as a land mine that exploded on a rural road beneath the car of three photographers in January, killing United Press Interna-

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tional television cameraman Ian Mates and injuring Susan Meiselas and John Hoagland of, respectively, *Time* and *Newsweek*. But there is also substantial evidence that journalists are special targets of surveillance and reprisal by right-wing death squads and the Christian Democrat-military junta.

President José Napoleón Duarte's publicly stated opinion is that the international press "collaborates with the left." Victims of abduction, threat and shooting have included journalists from all independent Salvadoran papers, The Associated Press, the U.P.I., the Spanish news agency EFE, Mexico's major dailies, Swedish radio and *The New York Times*, among others. Thus, while any war endangers those reporters who venture beyond the bar of the local Hilton, this particular war's black record of exile and death among journalists has made fear the order of the day. A few examples:

§ According to reporters from EFE and U.P.I., Col. Marco Aurelio Gonzalez of the Armed Forces' press committee personally threatened them, demanding coverage more favorable to the Government.

§ René Tamsen, a reporter for WHUR radio in Washington, D.C., was abducted by soldiers last April and has not reappeared. Witnesses say he repeatedly identified himself to the soldiers as a member of the press.

§ The U.P.I. chief in El Salvador, Demetrio Olaciregui, was threatened directly by members of the Government last year, and says that in one conversation with President Duarte he was also indirectly threatened. He had to leave the country.

§ Last August, while driving with Hoagland and Raul Beltrán of U.P.I. in front of the Government Center building in San Salvador, Ignacio Rodriguez Terrazas of the Mexican daily *Uno Más Uno* was killed by soldiers firing on him from inside the building. Other correspondents from his paper and from *Excélsior*, Mexico's largest paper, have been expelled.

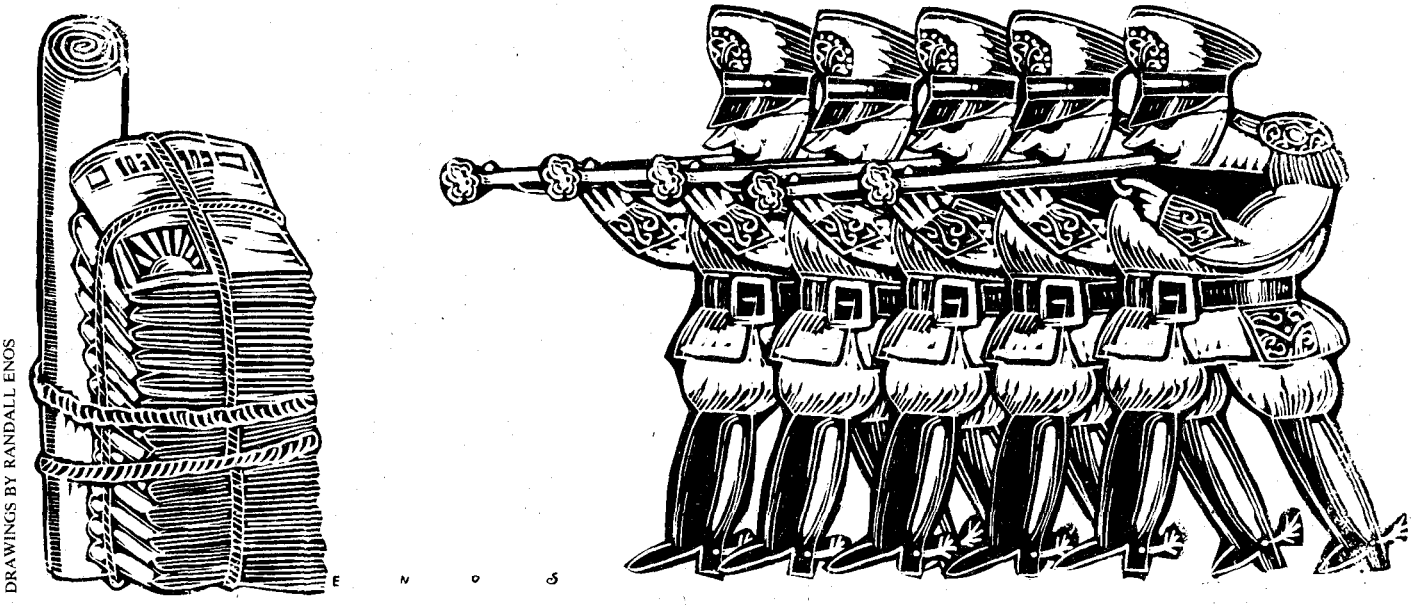
§ In January, Government troops threatened to kill two A.P. journalists, Joe Frazier and Eduardo Vásquez-Becker if they did not leave the scene of a battle within ten minutes

§ After his son was murdered—as a "warning," said the death squad—Salvadoran journalist Abel Salazar Rodezno fled the country, as have many prominent Salvadoran news people, including personnel of the major papers *La Crónica* and *El Independiente*. All independent papers have been bombed and/or shut down; the bodies of *La Crónica*'s managing editor Jaime Suárez Quemaín and photographer César Najarro were found mutilated after they were abducted by a death squad.

The Salvadoran Government systematically watches journalists, with special attention to foreigners. According to a sensitively placed Salvadoran, the Office of Central Telecommunications monitors all phone conversations of the foreign press. Several journalists in El Salvador confirm that the Armed Forces' press committee receives copies of all teletype communications through direct monitoring. Surveillance, moreover, starts at point of entry; reporters have noticed that when they identify themselves at the airport as press, their names are checked against a list.

That this harassment affects reporters' ability to cover events is beyond question; in itself it should be sufficient cause for a U.S. media hue and cry against terrorism—that now-fashionable bogy—by Government forces. But it does not explain why Mexican, French and Spanish journalists, Dutch television and others equally under fire have covered the refugee crisis, military developments, the disastrous agrarian reform, international response, protest demonstrations and defections from the junta far more thoroughly than their American counterparts.

Any Mexican knows the significance of the fact that, in more than two years, the Salvadoran Government has not sponsored a mass rally of the people—why are Americans not so informed? Why are Americans not told (except in *Inquiry* magazine, November 10, 1980) of crucial incidents like the Sumpul massacre of May 14, 1980, when an estimated 600 peasants trying to flee across the Sumpul



DRAWINGS BY RANDALL ENOS

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River to Honduras were killed by Salvadoran soldiers at their backs while their escape was blocked by Honduran soldiers? Even the cautious U.S. journal *Foreign Affairs* last summer contained an essay clarifying the importance of centrist forces in the Revolutionary Democratic Front (F.D.R.), and the junta's dependence on the extreme right. Yet major U.S. newspapers and television news programs persist in characterizing the F.D.R. as "the leftist opposition" or simply "leftist guerrillas/terrorists"—a degree of distortion that precisely reflects U.S. policy.

A recent study of *New York Times* coverage by young journalists Ivna Gusmao and Alan Benjamin examines five key periods in the Salvadoran conflict's development since January 1980, and compares *Times* reporting and analysis with that of *Le Monde*, *Excélsior* and two other foreign journals. The study finds that, with relatively few exceptions, America's most influential newspaper avoided attributing violence to the Government, even in cases where soldiers were clearly responsible—like the firing on a massive protest demonstration in San Salvador on January 22, 1980. In the course of covering an agrarian country, where peasants make up the majority of the victims of repression, *The Times* quoted peasants only twice during the five periods reviewed. Its analysis of what the agrarian reform had actually accomplished was contradictory; it tiptoed around the military occupation and repression that the program has made possible, and it did not report significant protests against that repression. In short, the study shows that, with a few exceptions, *The Times* followed the State Department line that violence came from the extremes of right and left, with the Government occupying the political center.

By contrast, *Le Monde* and the other foreign papers reviewed have been characterizing the junta as isolated on the right since a year ago, when a majority of the Christian Democrat Party denounced rightist military control of the Government and split from Duarte, along with the junta's civilian members, to help form the F.D.R. Government-sponsored violence is thoroughly covered by these papers. (There have been exceptions to the rule of biased U.S. coverage, among them the Alexander Cockburn-James Ridgeway articles in *The Village Voice* and Anne Nelson's reporting. The rule predominates, however.)

One telling aspect of the one-sided U.S. coverage is that amid a barrage of reports alleging Cuban and Nicaraguan deliveries of arms, the American media have made almost no mention of the Catholic Church's Legal Aid Office. This office, the central source of documentation on human rights in El Salvador, has blamed the security forces and death squads for the vast majority of killings. Nor is the military extreme right exposed; after reports of ultra-rightist Col. Roberto D'Aubuisson's plan for a coup sidetracked Duarte's trip to Bonn recently—Duarte was to explore negotiating with the F.D.R.—the U.S. media dropped the story almost faster than the State Department, without questioning its origins, superb timing or implications for U.S. military aid. Investigations, unfortunately, might disturb the delicate imbalance of coverage, and it seems the media, like Congress, hate to make a new President look wrong.

The formula is wearing thin enough, however, so that some journalists are concerned, both for their colleagues' safety under repressive conditions and for the public's enlightenment. Two results of that concern are the Committee to Protect Journalists, which will compile and distribute information on violations of journalists' rights—including those in El Salvador—and the El Salvador Information Office (ES-INFO), a clearinghouse of daily international wire news, photographs, background and coverage on El Salvador, set up for journalists to supplement reports from the field. It is to be hoped that such efforts jog the media's pride and principles, so the Salvadoran junta may receive the credit for repression that is its due. □

DEMOCRACY'S DIALECTIC

The Future of Equality

PHILIP GREEN

The election of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States, following the installation of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister of Britain, confirmed that further advances in the direction of social and political equality are not on the immediate agenda in most advanced capitalist nations today. How can they be in the *sauve-qui-peut* atmosphere of inflation and the productivity crisis afflicting contemporary capitalism? In such a climate, and particularly in a nation with the individualist political traditions and fragmented political institutions of the United States, the idea of collective action for improvement and self-government languishes.

In times of crisis, too, the so-called inefficiency of public enterprise (as though any collective enterprise were ever unwasteful) comes to the fore of public consciousness, for the simple reason that we are unable to vent our anger effectively on more fundamental sources of the crisis. The ineptitude of conventional liberalism, real enough in recent years, becomes greatly inflated in the public eye (with a good bit of help from its opponents). Ironically, the tighter the stranglehold of "private" enterprise on our lives (and in few places is it tighter than in the United States), the more the public sector and public agencies must bear the burden of public unhappiness—not because they are less responsive than private enterprises but because they comprise the only social sector that is responsive to any extent at all.

Moreover, in a time of persistent economic crisis scapegoating becomes a routine activity. The average citizen

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gets the message that nothing effective can be done to redistribute power and wealth from the top, leaving the middle classes to pay for costly social changes. Thus the idea of redistributive public agency becomes associated in the minds of many with preferential aid to minorities. That is true most especially in the United States, where racial differences are a visible source of constant, harassing tension, and where a respected intellectual clique has come to prominence on the basis of, among other things, its insistence on "blaming the victims" for the costs we all pay for the persistence of racial inequality.

All that having been said, it would be a disastrous error for liberals or radicals to fall prey to the notion, vigorously propagated on the right, that "the people" don't really want more equality, that the search for more equality is nothing more than a dream of disenchanted intellectuals and that elite conservative intellectuals with upper-middle-class incomes are somehow the true spokesmen of "the real majority." For we have been through such times before, and historically the necessary outcome of such periods is neither clear nor given. Indeed, if we are about to take a decisive "right" turn in social policy, it will be for the first time.

In the past century and a half the advance of capitalism has everywhere deepened the social division of labor and thus inequality on the one hand, inspiring and broadening the search for more equality on the other.

The ethos of capitalism is systematized inequality. From cradle to grave we subsist in a world of unequal incentives and rewards, of sharply stratified and omnipresent hierarchy. Very early we recognize that a satisfactory life will consist, for most of us, of fitting into some slot or other which is specifically defined as one rung on an ascending ladder of rewards and opportunities. Not to fit into that structure is to claim, literally, the status of misfit: a status likely to be unpleasant even for those whose only realistic alternative is the bottom rung of unskilled laborer.

Moreover, even those who suffer from it the most do not easily oppose or rebel against the system of inequality. As long as our social reward maintains us at a level at least of subsistence, that subsistence easily becomes an attractive bird in the hand compared with the hypothetical two in the bush promised by proponents of radical reform. At any given moment the alternative for most people is likely to seem either a continuation of a system in which they are surviving—even if (for many) uncomfortably—or a probable plunge into chaos if demands for a different system are taken too seriously. Just as even the strongest trade unions may be daunted by management threats to close down operations if they persist in their demands for more, so more generally the well-being of everyone is clearly endangered by the threats of the managers of capital to export it, or disinvest in it, should reformers or revolutionaries persist in their demands for "more."

Unless the demand for equality is fueled by a natural tendency of the system toward growth (as in periods of general economic advance), or by real despair (as in periods of major depression), it remains off in the future, and no road seems to lead directly to it. Indeed, in the more usual periods of inflationary advance or of general but uneven economic development, segments of the working class are easily turned against each other in the name of protecting those marginal differences in position that differentiate them. In short, inequality as the predominant feature of capitalism comes to seem an inescapable necessity of life.

Because what *is* seems at any given moment to be what is *necessary*, "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas," as Marx wrote. But although the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas, they are not the only ideas. Furthermore, the ideas by which a ruling class justifies itself to society as a whole somehow must also seem to speak to the needs of society as a whole, if the ruling class is to be allowed to continue its rule. In short, the ideas of an epoch always contain their own contradictions.

Thus the system of material production (and relationships of material production) we call "capitalism" is also historically associated with a political and social system that we call "liberal democracy." Whereas the ethos of capitalism per se is inequality, the ethos of liberal democracy is equality. Despite vast economic divisions we learn that we are all citizens and in some sense equally citizens; that every citizen should count for one and none for more than one; that government is supposed to be of, by and for the people; and that the system promises worldly "success" to all of us who are not incorrigible idlers: every man (if not woman) can be a king. Authority is alleged to result only from merit, not from wealth, and wealth itself is justified as a reward for serving an important social function.

From the perspective of capitalist reality, liberal

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democratic "equality" must seem like a set of illusions, a pleasing facade hiding ugly but necessary truths. But from the perspective of liberal democracy, capitalist "reality" comes to seem a fraud, a betrayed promise, even if everyone knows that the promise was never intended seriously. "Equality of opportunity," though a truth for some, also remains clearly a myth for many; as such, it becomes a source of cynicism. Incredible disparities of income and power do not dwindle over time, or dwindle only slightly, no matter how hard those at the bottom of the ladder work to overcome them; wealth and power are flaunted in displays that have no conceivable relation to any vital social function. Born from that sense of betrayed promise, waves of egalitarianism, of demands for "more equality"—populism, socialism, or merely the inflationary demands of organized labor—periodically break upon the capitalist shore. In no capitalist nation can the public philosophy be described as simply either inegalitarian or egalitarian; the balance between the two moods always depends on which leaders or parties are prepared to press which demands at which historical junctures.

Since the legitimate capacity to make public policy stems, however tenuously, from the egalitarian institution of universal suffrage—majority rule—the actions of governing apparatuses partake of the same dualism found in the public philosophy. Since the introduction of universal manhood suffrage at least, in all capitalist societies those who control the state justify their actions sometimes in the name of more equality, sometimes in the name of equal growth in well-being for all—but hardly ever in the name of inequality. If a tax break is advocated for corporations, or the wealthy, that is done only in the name of increasing (allegedly) economic growth for the benefit of all. Special advantages for economic elites, as in the U.S. tax code, are introduced sub rosa, never proclaimed out loud. No one defends legislation by suggesting that the better class should be rewarded more and the inferior class less (except where the latter are alleged to be idle spongers); no legislator who hopes to advance in political life ever announces that his goal is to permanently maintain existing inequalities because some people naturally deserve more than others and it is morally right that they get it. Business elites in most capitalist societies spend a good deal of time and money vociferously denying that they exercise any independent power at all, political or economic; and even the most unregenerate opponents of social reform actually suggest that if only the right (i.e., laissez-faire) policies were followed, the gap between rich and poor would in the long run narrow rather than widen: this is the homage that vice self-consciously pays to virtue.

By and large, the only exceptions to these generalizations are to be found in those few situations, mostly from the period between the wars, where an entire working class was subjected to direct coercion (e.g., Nazi Germany), or where ruling classes have managed to exercise coercion against a scapegoated segment of a fragmented working class (e.g., the American South). For at least a quarter of a century, however, in virtually every advanced capitalist society political debate has followed the pattern outlined above, conservative parties being distinguished from liberal, social democratic, democratic socialist or Communist parties chiefly by their insistence that "what is good for General Motors is good for the country," not by any overt justifications of inequality.

In his controversial and influential work, *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls proposed as a fundamental principle of justice (in a democratic society) what he called "The Difference Principle," which held that "social and economic inequalities, for example inequalities of wealth and authority, are just only if they result in compensating benefits for everyone, and in particular for the least advantaged members of society." Hostile anti-egalitarian critics treated Rawls as though in announcing this principle he had deserted the traditions of liberal democracy for some kind of menacing revolutionary doctrine. In fact, however, it was Rawls who was properly representing the liberal tradition, and his critics who were deserting it. And since liberal egalitarianism at times begins to shade over into reformist policies that loosen the grip of capitalist inequality (as in movements for worker self-management in Sweden and Norway), and at other times generates more radical demands precisely as its illusory nature becomes too painfully evident to too many people, the demand for more equality is always potentially on the agenda of liberal capitalist politics. Even in periods of retrenchment, policies favorable to the continuation of capitalist inequality are never adopted without a struggle. The Rawlsian promises made by the parties of inequality during those struggles ("we'll all be better off in the end if only we tighten our belts now") offer hostages to the future and thus lay the groundwork for further waves of egalitarian agitation.

The most obvious explanation for this is that large numbers of people are more or less receptive to egalitarian persuasion. Public opinion polls even in the relatively "conservative" United States show substantial support for such symbols of "more equality" as national health insurance,

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price controls, the equal rights amendment and even to a growing extent some public control over corporate power. If we define "equality" in the utopian sense of absolute equality and an end to the social division of labor, then no doubt most people will reject it: the idea makes neither practical nor intellectual sense given the way most of us willy-nilly lead our lives. But to deny that the majority of people would like to lead lives that offer them, and their children, prospects for material satisfaction and political influence much less sharply inferior to those of existing economic elites, is to fly in the face of all the historical, behavioral and rhetorical evidence available to us.

Since the most fundamental inequality in capitalist society is between the many who, owning no means of production, must work in order to live, and the few who own means of production and thus need not work in order to live, political conflict will focus on that inequality, unless it can be somehow deflected. Those who think that the cause of equality will gain from the confrontation attempt to persuade the less-politicized majority that their real enemy is the economic elite: "big business," or "capitalists." Those who wish to deflect the conflict may attempt to persuade this same majority either that their real enemy is located abroad, in which case all classes would have a common interest in overriding their class differences; or that their real enemy is some other social group, a minority against whom they would do better to ally themselves with the business interest. Or both.

In effect, these are the two major, permanent alignments in any capitalist society, whatever names they go by at any moment and however well-organized and well-represented they actually are. Even when, as in the United States today, the egalitarian tendency is barely represented in one of the only two organized political parties, its lingering effects still offer about the only distinction between those parties. In this perennial conflict, members of the knowledge class—those who specialize in public writing and public talking—must necessarily play the major part on *both* sides: must present the arguments for and against more equality. Within that class the ideological contradictions of capitalist society are therefore played out.

The substance of these arguments, of course, varies with circumstances: fashions in debate vary as do fashions in everything else, and perhaps for similar reasons. Little more than a decade ago, most intellectuals, journalists and political activists assumed that the conditions inhibiting an approach to more equality were structural and thus in principle subject to attack. In a reformist tradition containing such diverse figures as Marx, Mill, Dewey, Tawney, Gunnar Myrdal and Franklin D. Roosevelt, the instrumentalities of government were seen by most people as the logical weapons for that attack. Opposition to egalitarianism centered on the alleged inefficiency or utopianism of nonmarket or cooperative economic practices, as well as on the notion that the autocratic Communist societies of Eastern Europe demonstrated both the unlikelihood of achieving real equality and the dangers apparently inherent in making the attempt.

On the other hand, home-grown theories of egalitarianism (e.g., "the New Left") were undergoing a rebirth in the United States, Britain, France and several of the West European social democracies. These theories forswore the East European model and emphasized decentralization as the most appropriate path to more equality. Moreover, throughout the capitalist world, popular (if not mass) movements were inspired and activated by the new egalitarian doctrines. Both an academic and a political debate were truly joined during the 1960s, and at least the argument that egalitarianism was simply utopian seemed much less compelling than it had just a short time before.

It may not be a coincidence that the closer the issue of equality came to being on the agenda of practical political action, the more social scientists began to provide arguments supporting existing elites and the maintenance of gross inequalities. Precisely at the height of the earlier debate about equality, and perhaps incited by threats from popular movements against racial, sexual and class inequalities, there was a resurgence of interest in the Victorian "science" of biologically rooted inequality, which in the United States had been only an underground current in the intellectual and academic worlds. Now biological inegalitarianism has again become one of the major strategies adopted by intellectuals wishing to justify the maintenance of things as they are. At the same time, and in large measure in response to unrelenting demands for racial and sexual equality, American intellectuals and politicians who once thought that the use of public policy to bring about more equality was limited only by practical exigencies began to retreat from the whole idea of public political action and of social reform. Instead, more and more of them argued, and continue to argue, that egalitarian public policies are by nature unjust and oppressive, even when they bear no visible relation to the Communist model or to utopian projections. These two streams of thought fit together quite logically, the one claiming that egalitarianism is socially destructive and the other that it can accomplish nothing anyhow because of biological limitations. Thus during the 1970s the intellectual party of inequality gradually came to dominate the American dialogue, and this party opposes not only perfect equality but any further advances toward equality at all.

To a great extent, of course, that shift was a response to domestic and international developments adversely affecting the comparative wealth and power of many Americans as part of a national group and as individuals. But in some measure also that shift was heralded, inspired and continually promulgated by the academics and intellectuals who now command the front pages of the newspapers and prime time on public television.

The unchecked individualism which these new ideologues of inequality justify and express is false to the experience of most people, as the arguments that justify it are false to our knowledge of history and social relationships. But as an ideology which most people also accept from time to time it is still extremely potent; after all, billions of dollars are spent every year to propagate it. Therefore, inegalitarianism will

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continue to be the dominant intellectual tendency in the near future. To criticize the ideology of the new individualism will thus be to swim against the stream—but with the intention of recalling people, ultimately, to a different version of social reality which, when they stop to think about it, they will know to be true. The near future is not the only future.

The concrete interests of various groups that in Marx's terms ought to be experienced in political unity are instead perceived as opposed by members of those groups themselves, not only in the United States but almost everywhere in the industrial world. Obviously, essays and books written for an intellectually trained audience can hardly change that condition; interests are what they are and will be what they will be until powerful actors on the political stage can bring about a change in the conditions that produce the opposition of interests. In the expectation that that eventuality will come about, one of the major, if more modest purposes of egalitarians during the coming period ought to be to continue to demonstrate that the arguments of the new individualism, whether biological, economic, ethical, or political, are factually worthless, conceptually inadequate and morally indefensible. If that demonstration is persuasive, then when the time comes, as it surely will, for a new turn in our politics, we will be better prepared to help make sure that that turn will be away from the pursuit of inequality, and toward a renewed effort to achieve more equality. □

Catastrophe

(Continued From Front Cover)

brought by the public utility commissions of New York State and North Carolina. And even the Attorney General of Texas—Texas, of all places, where natural gas is almost as plentiful as sagebrush—has asked for a hearing on prices being charged by Colorado Interstate Gas, which sells to People's Natural Gas Company, which in turn sells to farmers in the Texas Panhandle. The farmers, who rely on cheap natural gas for their irrigation pumps and other operations, are rebelling against the high fuel prices they pay. When even the farmers in the Texas Panhandle are outraged, one has to conclude that the people of the nation in less favored areas are being rooked right out of their boots.

All of this is happening at a time when the Reagan Administration speaks in a single voice of decontrol—if not this year, then next—and of a "free market" that will run according to the hoary rule of supply and demand, equalizing prices for everybody. The Reaganites'* eighteenth-century economics ignores one of the most obvious facts of the twentieth century: the law of supply and demand has been declared inoperative by the Big Oil cartel.

The issue is fundamental to the future well-being of the nation, for it will determine whether this country will continue as a democracy, with at least the possibility of a fair shake for its citizens, or whether it is to be an oil-dominated oligarchy with financial and political power concentrated in ever fewer hands. The issue affects—and will continue to affect—every aspect of American life, for it involves an enormous transfer of wealth from lower- and middle-class Americans into the hands of the relatively few petroleum buccaneers who hold the levers of power.

Had the nation a government able to perceive twentieth-century realities, there might be some hope, but the Reagan people rely on slogans rather than substance. Take the government off the backs of the people, they say. Cut the Federal budget by some $40 billion this year, more next year. Give everyone a 10 percent tax cut that means a lot to a millionaire but precious little to a family making $15,000 a year. Then supply-side voodoo will bring inflation down and make everybody productive. But all of this ignores a principal cause of inflation—energy costs set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in collaboration with their greedy partners, the emperors of Big Oil.

PART I: Catastrophe Number One

American consumers are now living with the inflationary aftereffects of a policy that has allowed an international energy cartel to administer energy prices with almost complete disregard for market forces. The results could be called Catastrophe Number One. The coming decontrol of natural gas, however, will be a second, even severer blow—Catastrophe Number Two. To understand what lies ahead, we need only look at the record of how Big Oil has exercised its market dominance.

Representative John Dingell, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, documented Big Oil's role in creating inflation at a hearing in Washington on March 12. Said Dingell: "Direct and indirect energy costs have contributed about one-third to the total inflation in consumer prices in 1979 and 1980. Put another way, but for the increase in energy prices, the rate of inflation in the last two years would have been about 8 percent, or roughly the same level as in 1978." Other estimates put energy's share of inflation at 40 percent.

OPEC, of course, raised petroleum prices in both 1979 and 1980; but the record shows that every time OPEC jumped the price of crude, the major oil firms benefited handsomely. Dingell said: "According to a report by the Democratic Study Group, oil company profits accounted for a staggering 40 percent of all profits earned by all U.S. manufacturing firms in 1980. (*Business Week* cited the same figure.) In other words, some thirty oil companies made almost as much profit as the 9,000 other major U.S. companies. They did so at the expense of those 9,000 companies."

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About that time, Exxon announced a staggering 1980 profit of $5.66 billion, and it was reported that eight of the ten top money earners for the year were oil companies. (Only A.T.&T. and I.B.M. managed to sneak into the magic circle.) And the oil companies had embarked on a whirlwind takeover campaign to absorb more American industries.

The latter trend was not new. In recent years Mobil, the second largest oil company, had paid more than $1 billion to buy Montgomery Ward, and since then had poured out another $200 million in interest-free loans to prop up the big merchandising chain. Exxon had spent $1.17 billion to buy Reliance Electric Company in the hope of marketing an energy-saving motor device. (Several similar devices were already on the market, and Exxon acknowledged in mid-March that its Reliance adventure had been a failure.) Conoco, Gulf, Occidental, Shell and Standard Oil of Ohio had bought up some of the largest coal reserves in the nation. And let's not forget Mobil. As it proclaimed on March 19 in one of its Op-Ed effusions in *The New York Times*, Mobil is "feeling celebratory, for a change." The reason? Mobil announced it was developing a "massive" coal mine covering 5,800 acres near Gillette, Wyoming, from which it expects to extract 320 million tons of coal a year. It also has "a promising process for converting coal-derived methanol into high-octane gasoline"—a process that can be economically feasible only if energy prices keep going up.

All of this was little more than a prelude for the shocks that hit Wall Street even as Representative Dingell's hearing was being held. Standard Oil of Ohio announced that it was buying Kennecott, the nation's largest copper producer, for $1.77 billion. (Atlantic Richfield, back in 1977, had acquired Anaconda, the second largest copper producer.) Wall Street had hardly recovered from this announcement when Standard Oil of California announced it was willing to pay $4 billion for Amax Inc., the largest producer of critically important molybdenum, the third largest coal producer and a firm with additional oil and gas interests. Amax's board of directors resisted the offer, though some of its stockholders clamored for its acceptance.

There have been an incredible number of other takeovers by the oil-rich oligopolies that seem intent on devouring as large a portion of American business as their bloated billions of dollars will permit. Texaco has expanded into veterinary chemicals; Sun Oil now owns a grocery chain and a manufacturer of fever thermometers. Exxon, Mobil, Gulf, Texaco, Royal Dutch/Shell and Standard Oil of Ohio have bought up thousands of acres in the coal-rich, oil-rich, gas-rich areas of West Virginia, southwestern Virginia, eastern Kentucky and Tennessee, western North Carolina and Alabama. A recent study showed that, in fifteen counties in West Virginia, eight oil companies own more than 50,000 surface acres and more than 340,000 acres of subterranean mineral rights. In California's rich Kern County, the oil companies are big agribusiness concerns. Shell, Getty, Superior Oil and Tenneco have all become farmers, with Tenneco leading the way. Tenneco West, a subsidiary of the big oil company, has become the largest grower and shipper of table grapes in the nation; it markets about 25 percent of California almonds; it is the largest shipper of California dates; the third largest processor of raisins, and it processes about 40 percent of the American pistachio harvest.

"Old" Oil Made New

Where did the billions come from that enabled a relative handful of powerful companies to acquire such a corner on the economy of the nation? From oil, of course. But how? Representative Dingell's hearing provided some answers to that question; they showed that Big Oil had cut every corner of the law that could be cut, or else plunged into outright illegality.

Dingell opened his inquiry by disclosing that the special counsel of the Department of Energy under former President Carter had "alleged overcharges by major oil companies of more than $10 billion." Since Carter's D.O.E. was infiltrated by the oil companies to such a degree that they virtually owned it [see Cook, "Big Oil's Washington Subsidiary," *The Nation*, December 29, 1979], this $10 billion figure is probably a conservative estimate.

The trick was hyping "old" controlled oil to the highest going OPEC price through a series of transactions in which the same oil was sold and resold many times through a chain of resellers. The price was marked up at each step along the way until the same oil wound up in the hands of its original possessor, magically transformed from "old" oil to "new" oil bearing the highest international market price.

Many of these devious transactions were impossible to trace completely because, Dingell said, there were "mysterious transfers of funds from the resellers to offshore bank accounts. One D.O.E. report indicated that 'at least one reseller has transferred hundreds of thousands of dollars to an unknown party's Liechtenstein bank account.' " The Energy Department's auditors were prevented from following the trail to the end by a protective screen of foreign banking laws.

Witnesses at Dingell's hearing testified that, since October 1977, eleven firms and thirty-nine individuals had been convicted or entered pleas to felony or misdemeanor counts involving $800,000 in criminal fines and $6,575,000 in civil penalties. The department had 190 enforcement actions still pending, involving $8.5 billion in violations, and there were another 1,200 "open" cases in the auditing stage, or awaiting audit. So far, another $1.8 billion in violations had been identified in this last group of cases. (Under budget cutbacks proposed by the Reagan Administration, the auditing arm of the D.O.E. would be emasculated, and cases involving some $5 billion or more in ripoffs would have to be dropped.)

Citing Energy Department documents, Dingell showed that the resale of the same oil—and the concomitant mark-up in prices—went on at such a furious pace that it far exceeded the capacity of available pipelines. He said the D.O.E.'s data show "the number of in-line transfers on two large pipelines—the Shell Rancho system and the Shipshoal system, which I believe is owned by Exxon. As can be seen from the data turnover rate, a measure of the number of times each barrel of oil was resold has climbed dramatically

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since price controls were established in May of 1973. The June 1979 data indicate that on the Rancho system the average barrel made available for in-line transfers was resold nearly twenty-one times. In all, the daily volume transferred was roughly six times the capacity of the pipeline."

Though none of the majors have been prosecuted, at least one criminal referral had been prepared for the Department of Justice involving Mobil, American Petrofina and Tesoro Petroleum. It alleged that in the single month of September 1978, these companies, in collaboration with a chain of resellers, wrote up the price of 9.3 million barrels of West Texas crude so that it came out the end of the pipelines transformed into higher-priced "foreign" oil. The approximate overcharge for this one month was $43 million, but the D.O.E. referral pointed out that the reselling and markup activities "were continuous for the period January 1978 through November 1978."

Round and Round the Daisy Chain

The partners of Mobil, Petrofina and Tesoro were identified as two Carbonit firms—Carbonit of Houston and Carbonit International, headquartered in the Netherlands—Armada Petroleum, Derby & Company, and Uni Oil Inc. Uni was one of the first firms to be mentioned in this so-called "daisy chain" scandal when a young Texas lawyer, Joseph D. McNeff, blew the whistle on the reselling racket in 1979—and was threatened with arrest for his audacity. [See Cook, "The Great Daisy Chain Scandal," *The Nation,* July 7, 1979.] Uni was subsequently named in two indictments in the Southern District of Texas.

The ties between Mobil and the two Carbonit firms seemed especially close. Former employees of Mobil had become employees of Carbonit, and the president of Carbonit of Houston was a former vice president of Mobil. When the D.O.E. attempted to get a deposition from him, he invoked his Fifth Amendment privileges against possible self-incrimination.

The D.O.E. criminal referral cited one transaction which "gave up 750,000 barrels of West Texas Sour crude oil in the Mobil Pipeline at Midland with domestic certifications and received back an equal number of barrels of the same type of crude oil, at the same location, in the same pipeline, in the same month, with foreign certifications." The D.O.E. document accused Mobil of engaging in one series "of apparently sham transactions" from which it made $4,272,315. Carbonit "by accommodating Mobil . . . made an illegal profit of $757,000," and Armada, another of the resellers, made approximately $1,492,300.

The last paragraph of the D.O.E. referral to Justice read: "D.O.E. recommends the convening of a grand jury to conduct a thorough criminal investigation of the conduct described above." Yet no action was taken by the Justice Department. Representative Albert Gore asked Jerome Weiner, director of special investigations, office of the special counsel for the D.O.E., why nothing had been done. Weiner, who had sent the criminal referral to Justice, replied lamely that he had withdrawn the referral because "I concluded we needed further investigation with regard to the resellers and further information with regard to the majors."

Gore, the tiger on the Dingell committee, the man who had called the daisy chain scandal "probably the greatest criminal conspiracy in American history" after Joe McNeff testified, wasn't happy about the way Mobil had been let off the hook. He put the D.O.E. criminal referral into the record, and asked Weiner to explain why he had withdrawn his own recommendation. Weiner squirmed. He wouldn't let the name of Mobil pass his lips. What was happening? Gore wanted to know. Had more depositions been taken? Had bank accounts been examined? Or "is all that work left to be done and likely to be dropped?" Weiner protested that he could not "respond" to "any specific matter" under investigation, not even by answering Gore's questions with a simple "yes" or "no."

The same evasiveness surfaced when Gore injected another sensitive name into the hearing—that of Michael T. Halbouty, the Houston oil mogul who was the chief energy adviser to Ronald Reagan during the 1980 election campaign and who later became head of the transition team that recommended the elimination of the Department of Energy. Gore drew out testimony that in the D.O.E.'s pending case file were the names of twelve firms whose large transfers of oil had led to the suspicion that they might be involved in daisy chain operations. Eight of these firms had been or were being audited. Four were not. At the top of the list awaiting audit, Gore said, was the name of Halbouty. Gore questioned Gordon Harvey, assistant administrator for enforcement of the Economic Regulatory Administration, an arm of the D.O.E.

Gore: You have no allegation whatsoever of any wrongdoing by Mr. Halbouty, is that correct?

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Harvey: That is correct.

Gore: However, he is listed as the target of an audit based solely upon the size of the transactions he is involved in. Is that correct?

Harvey: I respectfully request that the committee not insist that I identify any firms which may or may not be targets of our investigation.

Pointing out that the list of names was in the record, and Halbouty's was on it because of the size of his transactions, Gore continued:

> All his buddies in the oil industry in Texas are being audited. They are all mad about it. They supported President Reagan to get all of these regulations off their backs. . . . Mr. Halbouty recommended doing away with the Department of Energy altogether. Now the Reagan Administration is proposing de facto to eliminate the enforcement of many of these cases. In fact, in order to save an estimated $40 million in this budget, they are going to lose for the public an estimated $7 billion in recovered charges and criminal penalties. My specific question on this now: Is it not true that Mr. Halbouty, the head of the transition team, is next on the list to be audited if the auditors are not fired?

Harvey again "respectfully" requested that he not be required to name any names, to which Gore commented:

> Can any of the other witnesses tell me? I think it is interesting that if the head of the transition team at the Department of Energy is next on the list to be audited, and all the auditors are about to be fired, or most of the auditors are about to be fired, I think that is pretty interesting.

However interesting it might be, none of the D.O.E. witnesses were going to let Halbouty's name pass their lips, despite the fact it was already on the record. Their conduct lent credence to a report that there are documents in D.O.E. files saying, in effect, "Don't touch Halbouty." Gore's frustration was evident:

> My constituents during the time gasoline prices were continuing to jump upward were mad. A lot of them are still mad. If they knew that criminal violations took place on the part of major oil companies which resulted in money being illegally taken from them and cases were being dropped, they would not like it.

Doubtless, the Congressman was right about the feelings of his constituents in Tennessee, but down in the heart of Texas it was another story. Representative Dingell's committee learned of a conference held in Houston in early February by oil magnates and their legal mouthpieces. The lawyers advised their clients to "stonewall" the Federal Government, the committee learned. D.O.E. witnesses said they had heard of the meeting, but didn't know the outcome. Apparently, however, there had been "two handshake agreements with large refiners to settle pending cases." After President Reagan decontrolled all petroleum prices and wielded his budget ax, the industry handshakers washed their hands and walked away scot-free.

The consequences to the American economy and the welfare of the average American are little more than hinted at in these disclosures. Almost certainly, the $10 billion in illegal scams uncovered in the last two years by an industry-influenced D.O.E. and a docile Justice Department represent only a small portion of the extortion to which the American people have been subjected since 1974. The ripoffs in the earlier years of the decade were never investigated, and what lies buried in the 1,200 "open" cases awaiting investigation will probably stay buried as the Reagan Administration proceeds with the gradual dismantling of the D.O.E. And that is only half of the story.

The Home Heating Oil Scam

Ever since No. 2 home heating oil was decontrolled by the Ford Administration in 1976, American homeowners and apartment-house dwellers have been victimized in a legalized scam that has probably poured more billions into the coffers of Big Oil than all of its daisy chain machinations. Once controls were lifted from heating oil, prices began an escalation that had nothing to do with OPEC price hikes or rising production costs. For at least half a century, heating oil had been one of the cheapest products of the refineries. It never sold for more than half the price of regular gasoline. Now it sells for more than regular gasoline.

The only investigation of this cruelest of all oil industry extortions was conducted by the staff of Representative Benjamin Rosenthal in 1979. The study covered only thirteen months, from September 1978 through September 1979; and it concluded—after making every allowance for higher crude oil prices and production costs—that refinery profits on heating oil had risen 800 percent. It calculated that American citizens who need heat to keep from freezing in bitter winters had had their pockets picked of $3.4 billion in just those thirteen months. And the high point was still to come. [See Cook, "Runaway Heating Oil Profits," *The Nation*, March 22, 1980.]

This irrefutable record should have alerted all but the ideologically blind to the hidden pitfalls in decontrol. But President Reagan ordered the lifting of all controls on petroleum prices by the end of January. His rationale for this precipitous move was that, by removing controls and letting the "free market" set prices, the oil industry would be encouraged to drill more and find more oil. There were two fallacies in this reasoning. First, there was such a glut of oil on the world market that the Saudis, our principal Middle East suppliers, were talking about cutting back production; second, drilling had proceeded at such a furious pace during 1980, even with controls, that there was an acute shortage of drilling rigs. It would be impossible to drill more until new rigs could be obtained months in the future.

Administration spokesmen sought to reassure the American people about the effects of decontrol. This free-market nostrum wasn't going to taste very bad or hurt very much, they said. The worst that might happen was that gasoline prices might rise 3 to 5 cents a gallon over the period of the next several months. It took Big Oil only ten days to shatter this myth. Gasoline and home heating oil took off in another wild upward spiral. Some gasoline companies' prices jumped 15 cents a gallon despite the fact that the oil glut had forced several refineries to cut back or close down.

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So much for the law of supply and demand.

Heating oil prices tracked the upward spiral of gasoline. By March 1, in the part of New Jersey where I live, heating oil was costing $1.279 a gallon. "Isn't it awful?" the secretary of one dealer said to me. Awful was putting it mildly. Heating oil is untaxed in New Jersey, while regular gasoline carries state and Federal taxes totaling 12 cents a gallon. Yet regular gasoline at two stations in our area (one of them a Citgo outlet) was selling at the same $1.279 price as heating oil. In other words, Big Oil was making 12 cents a gallon more out of "cheap" heating oil than it was out of the more highly refined and supposedly more costly regular gasoline.

The result should have jolted even the Reagan Administration. The Consumer Price Index for February rose a full 1 percent (more in the New York metropolitan area). This meant that, on an annual basis, inflation was again flying at a 12 percent rate. Even the President's spokesmen admitted that soaring fuel costs were the culprit. Some food items had declined, and food costs as a whole were almost flat. Housing prices and interest costs had dropped slightly. Automobile rebates to stimulate sales had reduced new car costs. But there had been an overall 8.4 cents-a-gallon increase in gasoline prices, and although Administration spokesmen at first made a feeble effort to blame this on OPEC, Murray Weidenbaum, chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, admitted to a Congressional panel that 6 cents of the rise could be attributed directly to decontrol.

This practice of giving an economic behemoth like the oil industry its head surely deserves to be called Catastrophe Number One. It has been a catastrophe for an automobile industry that has been brought to its knees; for airlines that have incurred staggering losses running into hundreds of millions of dollars despite higher fares; for utilities whose bills to customers have doubled while their earnings have flattened out; for farmers whose production costs have soared even more than their prices have risen, and for those millions of average Americans who have had to struggle with double-digit inflation. Only the oil industry has profited; it alone has reaped that mind-boggling multibillion-dollar harvest that is enabling it to buy up huge chunks of the nation's other resources.

PART II: Catastrophe Number Two

So closes the first chapter. We are now on the threshold of Catastrophe Number Two, one that could be avoided if enough of our leaders in Congress had the guts to do something about it. This potential catastrophe involves the pricing of natural gas—and the threat of a further calamitous experiment with decontrol.

Natural gas is the most abundant and valuable energy resource that we have. We may run out of petroleum by the year 2000—Big Oil's Doomsday scenario—but the developments of the last two years make it clear that we have in our own country almost limitless supplies of natural gas. Enough natural gas, even by the most conservative estimates, to supply all our energy needs, with the exception of transportation, for the better part of a century—and, in all likelihood, for many centuries to come.

"They are finding the stuff everywhere they look for it," one energy expert says—and a veritable explosion of new natural-gas discoveries in the last eight months supports him. Huge new fields have been developed in Louisiana, in the Tuscaloosa Trend and in the Overthrust Belt along the Rockies. Some individual wells are flowing at a rate of 40 million cubic feet a day, enough to supply 123,000 American homes with all the energy they need for heating, cooking and hot water.

In addition to these "barn-burners," as high-producing wells are known in the trade, widespread drilling across the nation has turned up immense quantities of natural gas in shallower wells and in areas where it had never been thought to exist. The previously neglected Appalachian region has suddenly erupted. A spokesman for Presidio Inc. of Denver describes the West Virginia-Tennessee region as "a pincushion" of shallow wells. Presidio has 103 working wells around Charleston, West Virginia, and is busily developing more. Petroleum Development announced that in 1980 it brought in seventy-one new gas wells in West Virginia and Tennessee. Most of these wells are exuding gas from depths as shallow as 1,500 to 2,000 feet; and, thanks to new seismic techniques, the risks of new drilling—wildcatting—have been almost eliminated. "We have a record of 90 percent success in drilling," a Presidio spokesman says.

When I first talked last year to Dr. Jones, the Tuscaloosa Trend's leading geologist, he estimated that there were 50,000 trillion cubic feet of gas in the aquifers of the Tuscaloosa Trend along the Gulf Coast. Since national consumption is in the range of 19 trillion to 20 trillion cubic feet annually, Dr. Jones's figures meant that this area alone contains enough gas to last for 2,500 years at present rates of consumption. "A lot of people thought I was crazy," Dr. Jones says now. "But recent discoveries and geological surveys have raised some estimates to 80,000 trillion cubic feet." After studying the "bright spots" that show up on seismic surveys indicating the presence of hydrocarbons, Dr. Jones now thinks that total resources in the Louisiana-Texas-Gulf area alone "may be five times my original numbers. The supply of gas is absolutely phenomenal. We can now drill down to 30,000 feet, and the reservoirs get bigger with increasing depth."

When I first called attention to our huge natural-gas reserves [see Cook, "The Natural Gas Boom," *The Nation,* July 12, 1980], I made some large producers unhappy. "This should never have been written," some of them moaned to Dr. Jones. He comments: "The reason they are upset about disclosing the amount of gas available is that they want to keep those prices up." And this is the crux of the issue involving potential Catastrophe Number Two.

There is no question that natural gas can be produced and delivered far more cheaply than oil. No 1,200-foot-long, multimillion-dollar supertankers are needed to transport it from the Middle East; it is right here in our own country. Here, too, are more than one million miles of pipelines and

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subsidiary mains capable of delivering 23 trillion cubic feet of gas a year. Pumping pressure is all that is needed to keep gas flowing through pipelines and mains. There is no need for costly refineries, trucking transportation, expensive point-of-sale delivery.

Yet the natural-gas industry clamors for decontrol to make gas "competitive" with oil. By "competitive" they mean that natural gas should be priced at the same B.T.U. level (British thermal units) as oil; this they call "parity."

Herman Schwartz, a veteran of the Washington scene and a lawyer now on the staff of Senator Howard Metzenbaum, calls natural-gas price decontrol "a crazy economic theory." He adds: "Oil is a very different fuel; it involves, for one thing, enormous refining and transportation costs. It is ridiculous to say that natural-gas prices should be governed by the free market when there is no free market; when prices are all controlled by a cartel."

The Money Rolls In

This is the kind of industry illogic that Stanley Balis, a Washington attorney, is attacking before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on behalf of the cities of Richmond and Charlottesville. The Carter Administration's Natural Gas Policy Act, passed in 1978, took all controls off gas found at depths below 15,000 feet. It also set a complicated, graduated set of controls for gas produced at various higher levels, and it provided that all controls would be lifted at the end of 1985. There is general agreement that the lifting of controls below 15,000 feet stimulated a lot of the current drilling that has resulted in deep-reservoir discoveries in the Tuscaloosa Trend and the Overthrust Belt. But two important developments that occurred subsequently are ignored by the 1978 act. First, huge amounts of gas are being found at shallow levels along the Appalachians, in the enormous Anadarko Basin that runs across Oklahoma, in the Mist region of northwest Oregon, in Ohio, Michigan, New York —in almost every state where drillers have looked for it; second, no one anticipated in 1978 that OPEC and its Big Oil partners would drive oil prices to their present astronomical levels. In other words, the "parity" envisioned in 1978 has no relation to the costly "parity" that would be imposed by decontrol today.

Even without decontrol, the pinch of higher natural-gas prices is beginning to be felt—and it is severe enough to make natural-gas utilities, some pipeline operators and even a few producers have second thoughts about the logic of decontrol. Both Department of Energy analysts and industry experts concede that the present market for natural gas is "soft." There are two reasons for this: uncertainty about where natural-gas prices are going on the part of consumers who might convert, and the present glut of crude oil that has flooded the market with heavy No. 6 residual oil which can be used in industrial plants. In many areas, this oil is now cheaper than natural gas which, as I mentioned at the outset, has a price of $7.56 a thousand cubic feet rolled into its overall distribution system. Many industrial plants have dual fuel systems, which enable them, at the flip of a switch, to turn off the gas and use cheaper residual oil instead.

"There is no need for $7 natural gas," Balis says. "You couldn't turn around and sell it at that price with the market as soft as it is. But many pipelines couldn't care less. They can 'roll it in' with cheaper gas and pass the costs through to the customers. They may also benefit because by using this $7 gas to set higher prices, they are establishing a level that makes the gas they may produce themselves more valuable."

The complaint Balis filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission points out that the Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation, which serves Richmond and Charlottesville, was asking for a $99,429,570 rate increase, plus an $18,889,143 surcharge adjustment for higher fuel costs. The complaint charges that Columbia was buying "high-cost" natural gas from Louisiana when cheaper gas was readily available in the area, and that Columbia was also seeking to collect a high-cost, "first-sale" price on gas that it produced itself.

As proof, Balis cited nineteen purchase contracts signed by Columbia at prices ranging from $6.47 per thousand cubic feet (M.C.F.) to $7.23 per M.C.F., with an average price of $6.87. The Columbia contracts provided for the purchase of 1,609,152 M.C.F. at these prices during the six-month period from March through August 1981, at a total cost of $11,061,173. Yet Columbia's own figures gave the cost of gas from Appalachian producers at $2.0851 and from other producers at $2.2112, Balis contends.

Evidentiary hearings in the Richmond-Charlottesville suit may drag on for months, and the burden of proof in such hearings is on the complaining cities to demonstrate that Columbia bought high-priced gas when cheaper gas was plentiful—that it was happy to pay for $7 gas because it could roll this in with its own gas and some cheaper supplies, winding up charging its customers $3 per M.C.F. "Economic magic," Balis calls the roll-in method. "How can you pay $7 for natural gas and sell it for $3? This can only be done when you have 'cushion' gas to roll in. I would like to see the supply-side zealots jolted by what would happen if we suddenly decontrolled everything as Reagan at first proposed. It would be like taking the slipper from Cinderella. There goes the cushion."

Perhaps it was only a coincidence, but two events occurred in a particular juxtaposition. Lawyers in the case had scheduled a pre-hearing conference for Friday, March 27. On Thursday, *The Wall Street Journal* carried an inconspicuous but significant two-paragraph announcement. It disclosed that Texas International Company had signed a contract with Columbia Gas for the daily delivery of 3 million cubic feet of natural gas from Texas International's West Virginia wells. The price? $2.77 per thousand cubic feet. The net profit to Texas International? $220,000 a month. Although the Columbia-Texas International contract may have been triggered by Balis's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission action, the $2.77 price, cheap by comparison with $7 gas, was still considerably higher than the $2.0851 average price that Columbia had said Appalachian producers were charging. This raises a vital question for American consumers: how should natural gas be priced?

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Price Fixing, Pure and Simple

One answer comes from David Schwartz, a Washington consultant who was an expert with the Federal Power Commission from 1965 until President Carter "rolled it into" the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission under the reorganization creating the D.O.E. Schwartz cites the last price study made by the Power Commission's staff in November 1978. The staff analysis showed that natural gas would be fairly priced at $1 per M.C.F. "This was taking into consideration all costs, leasing, drilling, everything—and then allowing a 17 percent margin for profit," Schwartz explains.

He adds that the Power Commission decided to up the figure to $1.52 per M.C.F. "They arrived at this figure by making an allowance for taxes the companies said they paid," Schwartz says. "No previous commission had ever granted such an allowance, and the staff had no way of knowing what taxes the companies paid, if any, because the companies refused to show us their books. Even the $1.52 price wasn't enough for Carter. When he came in with his Natural Gas Policy Act, the price was rolled up to $2.07"—in other words, more than double what the Power Commission staff had concluded would be a fair return, even allowing for a 17 percent profit.

Schwartz, who is working as a consultant to the Attorney General of New Mexico, was recently in Dallas, where he met with a number of oil men. "I talked with them about what is happening in the San Juan Basin and the Permian Basin," he said, "and it became clear that what is happening is that they are holding back on 'old,' regulated gas. They are only selling deregulated gas. That is price fixing, pure and simple."

Schwartz continues: "You do not have a competitive market. You have a monopolistic, oligopolistic market. New contracts are concentrated in the hands of eight firms, and they control well above 50 percent of the market. There are all kinds of interlocks. Bank interlocks, pipeline interlocks, interlocks with independents. Producers don't assume all the risks themselves. They form joint ventures. A major will combine with an independent, letting the independent do the drilling. If they strike it rich, the independent gets perhaps one-eighth of the profit. If the well is dry, the independent is the principal loser. The big majors dominate the market through these interlocks and joint ventures. What this represents is a major transfer of wealth from the citizens of this country to the major companies and the landowners."

This "major transfer of wealth" would be drastically accelerated were natural gas to be decontrolled immediately, as Reagan at first proposed. The President has hesitated to go ahead, however, because some of the more perceptive businessmen shudder at the decontrol prospect. One of these is Willis Strauss, board chairman and chief policy officer of InterNorth Inc., the parent of Northern Natural Gas Company, which supplies gas to seventy-four utilities in nine states.

Speaking at the seventh annual Minnesota Energy Conference in February, Strauss said that immediate decontrol "would be an economic disaster without resulting in increases in U.S. gas production." Under immediate decontrol, he said, "a large percentage of industrial consumers with alternate fuel capabilities would either switch fuels or be driven out of business by increased costs. Residential and other consumers who depend solely on natural gas would be breaking down the doors of their political representatives demanding protection."

In mid-March, Strauss's Northern Natural Gas followed up his statement by announcing it has a nine-year certified natural-gas reserve. And so it extended its agreements with the utilities it supplied last year with 719 billion cubic feet of gas from the mid-1980s through October 1991. At that time, a spokesman said, Northern Natural Gas expects to have a reserve sufficient for yet another ten years.

This abundant supply situation and the catastrophic decontrol scenario that Strauss so graphically described have resulted in a pause in the Reagan decontrol campaign. Indications are it is only a pause, not a halt. Informed sources in Washington think that the Reagan Administration will try to finesse the issue by gradually decontrolling certain levels of natural gas through administrative rulings, thus avoiding a controversial and highly politicized legislative debate. There is, however, a serious question about the legality of such actions since the various natural-gas pricing levels were legislated by Congress in the 1978 Natural Gas Policy Act. What Congress has legislated presumably only Congress should change. But there must be the will in Congress to challenge whatever devious methods toward decontrol the Reagan Administration may undertake.

Given this situation, Stanley Balis says, "There are only two logical solutions: these gas people should agree to be regulated permanently—or we should have decontrol right now. Those who voted for Ronald Reagan should be made

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to feel just what his program would cost them. Take what happened to gasoline, for example. It went up gradually from 30 cents to 40 and 50 cents a gallon; and then it kept creeping up by stages until people got accustomed to paying the higher prices—and so today you think nothing of paying $1.30, $1.45, or whatever. But if the consumer got hit with it all at once, the screams would rock Congress. It's time to put every Senator and Congressman on record."

A $626 Billion Gas Bill

The enormity of the issue has been most graphically described in the best consumer study made to date, which was prepared by Edwin Rothschild, director of Energy Action in Washington. Rothschild concludes that natural-gas decontrol would cost an additional $626 billion between 1981 and 1985 and that it would add another 3 to 5 percentage points to an inflation rate already boosted to 12 percent by Reagan's oil decontrol.

Since 55 percent of American households depend on natural gas for heating, the impact of decontrol would be even more devastating than decontrol of fuel oil prices. Rothschild's tables showed, for example, that a homeowner in the mid-Atlantic region using 101 M.C.F. of natural gas a year would be paying $1,348 under controls—and $4,767 under immediate decontrol. In 1979 there were forty-three million residential users of natural gas, 87 percent of whom used it for heating; and the wellhead cost of this gas came to nearly $6 billion, "an increase of 33 percent over the previous year."

As an illustration of the bonanza that is already being reaped by the natural-gas drillers, Rothschild cited the case of Amarex Inc., a small Oklahoma-based oil and gas producer. Amarex's gas-finding costs in 1979-80, Rothschild wrote, were 50 cents per M.C.F. He added: "Considering the fact that the company has emphasized deep gas drilling and that already half of its 110 billion cubic feet of proven reserves are located below 15,000 feet—for which it is receiving roughly $6 M.C.F.—it is not surprising that its profits are astounding."

Such contrasts illustrate vividly what is at stake. For the producer, 50-cent M.C.F. gas translates into a $6 return; for the homeowner, decontrol—and most of Amarex's gas is now decontrolled—would mean an increase of more than 300 percent in his home heating bill.

And this is only a small piece of the story. Such an escalation of natural-gas prices would have a disastrous impact on the American economy across the board. "For every dollar increase Americans pay in their heating bills, they will pay *three dollars more* for price increases in goods and services that consume natural gas," Rothschild wrote. "Industrial use accounts for 38 percent of total natural-gas usage; commercial use accounts for 14 percent; and utilities using natural gas to generate electricity account for 19 percent." The immediate impact of decontrol "would cost the nation as much as a $1 per gallon increase in the pump price of gasoline would cost consumers."

Every facet of the American economy would suffer. Electric bills from utilities using natural gas would soar. Food prices would rise still further since natural gas is used not only in powering irrigation pumps but as a primary material in the manufacture of fertilizer. Every industry using natural gas in its manufacturing processes—the already crippled automobile industry, textiles, construction, chemicals, paper, steel and machinery, all industries at the very heart of the American industrial process—would be devastated by natural-gas bills amounting to $330 billion in the five-year 1981-85 period, compared with the $34 billion they had paid in the previous five years.

Since there is no windfall profits tax on natural gas as there is on oil, decontrol would give Big Oil a ripoff that would make its huge profits up to now seem picayune by comparison. Oil companies, which doubled their profits in 1979, and added something like 30 percent more to those profits in 1980, would be rolling in literally trillions of dollars. Exxon, the largest oil and gas producer in the nation, would sop up nearly one out of every $12 in increased natural-gas prices. Since twenty of the largest oil companies produce more than half of the nation's natural gas and hold 60 percent of known reserves, Big Oil profits would explode. The combined profits of the dozen largest oil companies would equal the combined profits of at least 900 of *Fortune*'s 1,000 leading industrials.

Such a shift of wealth, Rothschild emphasizes, would literally change the face of the nation. The once-great industrial heartland in the North and Midwest would be crippled beyond hope. Many automotive, steel and machinery industries clustered in these regions "will be forced to shut down, or relocate to the Sun Belt, eroding further the tax base in the Northern states." Unemployment would become endemic; taxes on the weakened bases would become intolerable; and great cities already struggling on the brink of bankruptcy would become one chain of collapsing ghettos.

That is the prospect if the nation permits Catastrophe Number Two to overwhelm it. Virtually all sources agree on the dimensions of the potential calamity. Even Dr. Jones—a natural-gas advocate who feels his favorite product should be priced on a B.T.U. parity with oil—concedes: "The customer is going to be hurt. It's going to be extortion. It's going to be a case of dog eat dog. But you can't look at the consumer's side alone. The producers and landowners have their side, too."

But shouldn't there be limits? Should parity for natural gas—a euphemism that means OPEC and Big Oil will set all energy prices ad infinitum—be allowed to threaten the economic well-being of the entire nation? David Schwartz, the former Federal Power Commission expert, thinks there must be limits. "Gas is distinct from gasoline and distinct from all petroleum products except home heating oil," he says. "It is essential for the good of the people of the country. That's why we regulated it in the first place. Gas is, in effect, like a utility, and there are two reasons for regulating it: one, monopoly cannot give you an equitable price, and two, it's an essential public need."

Herman Schwartz, Senator Metzenbaum's assistant, sums it all up succinctly: "It all comes down to ideology and greed. There is nothing rational in this situation." □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

An Ever-Widening Embrace

KATHERINE BOUTON

THE MAPMAKERS. *By John Noble Wilford. Alfred A. Knopf. 448 pp. $20.*

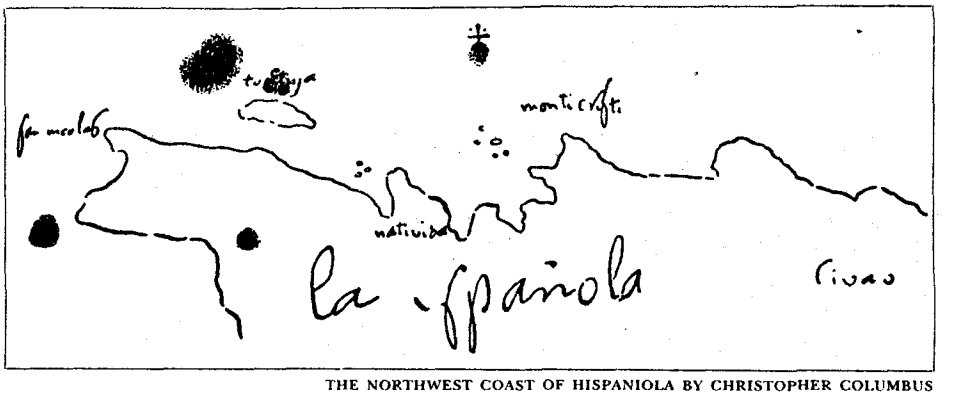
The ability to conceive of spatial relations and the skill to make two-dimensional models of them is an apparently universal human trait. When Captain Cook asked a Tahitian for information about how to get around his part of the South Pacific, the Tahitian drew him a map. Making a map of the whole world always seemed to me simply an extension of the Tahitian's directions: once you knew how to get to Madagascar, all you had to do was put it on the map. John Noble Wilford's fascinating and first-rate history of mapmaking dispels that illusion. Knowing how to get to Madagascar is easy; knowing where it really *is* is another matter. Today, with the most sophisticated devices imaginable, conventional cartography can still pin a spot down only relatively precisely—within three or four meters. When a triangulation system using satellites was finally set up in the late 1960s, it turned out that North America and Europe had been misplaced by 100 meters or so on modern maps, and that some islands in the Pacific were three kilometers or more off the cartographer's mark.

Wilford, who is a science correspondent for *The New York Times*, has set out here to tell "the story of the mapmakers in its full historical sweep," something that hasn't previously been attempted. The book is a fluent, entertaining tale, and an inspiring one; Wilford is dealing with humanity at its best. The early cartographers endured extraordinary hardships in the pursuit of scientific truth. In the mid-eighteenth century, two Frenchmen, Pierre Bouguer and Charles Marie de La Condamine, spent nine and a half years in the jungles of Peru in an attempt to measure a single degree of latitude, to see if it was shorter there than a degree farther north, nearer the poles. It is, as they discovered; the earth bulges at the Equator. Unfortunately for Bouguer and Condamine, a simultaneous French expedition to Lapland proved the very same point, in less than two years.

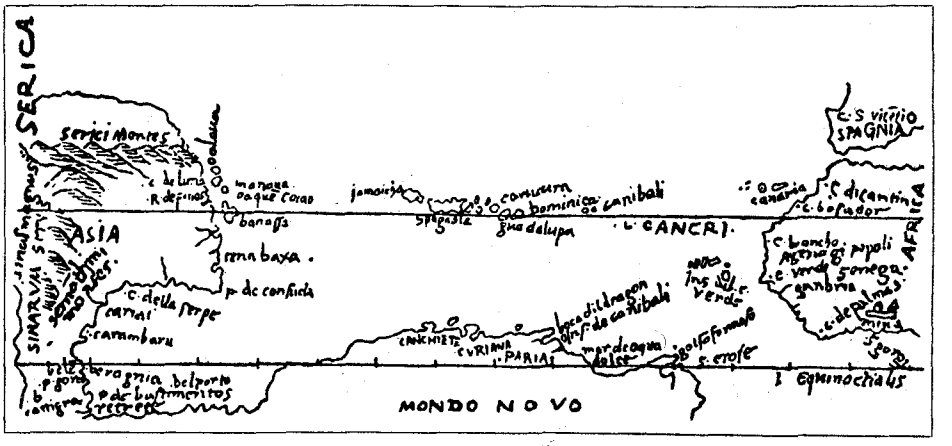
Such dedication is not untypical. The so-called "pundit explorers," British-trained Indian cartographers, penetrated the forbidden territory of Tibet, often disguised as lamas on pilgrimage. Their surveying instruments were concealed in false-bottomed boxes, their prayer wheels contained not prayers but blank slips of paper for recording figures, their Buddhist rosaries were equipped with 100 rather than 108 beads, "for obvious mathematical purposes." The price of discovery was almost certain death.

Wilford's story of man's zeal to map the earth begins with the earliest examples known: clay tablets found in archeological sites in the Middle East, dating from the second millennium B.C. One of these, from Nuzi, in northern Iraq, shows settlements, streams, hills and cultivated fields—a topographical map, much like those made by the U.S. Geological Survey today. This map had a clear geographical orientation, with east at the top "presumably because that was the direction of the sunrise." Maps would again be oriented to the east (hence the term "orientation") in the Middle Ages—when east was thought to be the direction of Paradise. Paradise was, in fact, prominently and hopefully placed on all medieval maps, sometimes on an island off easternmost Asia, sometimes on the mainland, walled off by a curtain of fire.

The medieval map was, as Wilford says, "a representation of the mind more than of the Earth." The land of the Biblical Gog and Magog was also represented, usually in the direction of northern Russia. According to the prophet Ezekiel, the murderous hordes living there were—for the moment, at least, and presumably until the Apocalypse—held back behind high walls. And the kingdom of the legendary Prester John—the rich and powerful, and probably mythical, Christian king who might save western Christianity from the Mongols and Saracens (and Gog and Magog) if only he could be found—was situated in Asia. It was a wonderful place, as someone claiming to be Prester John himself boasted in a letter circulated throughout Europe in



THE NORTHWEST COAST OF HISPANIOLA BY CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS



THE NEW AND OLD WORLDS BY ALESSANDRO ZORSI

Katherine Bouton is a contributor to The New Yorker.

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the twelfth century: "Honey flows in our land, and milk everywhere abounds. In one of our territories no poison can do harm and no noisy frog croaks." Prester John's domain appeared on maps as late as the mid-fifteenth century. When Marco Polo failed to discover it on his explorations in Asia, it was relocated to Africa, one last bit of wishful cartographic thinking.

Before and after the Middle Ages—that "thousand-year slough of intellectual stagnation," in Wilford's words—the story of the mapmakers is one of innovation and enterprise, and brilliant individual intuition. Wilford tells how the Greek Eratosthenes measured the circumference of the earth in the third century B.C. using a well, an Egyptian obelisk, the position of the sun in the sky and an elementary principle of geometry. Eighteen hundred years later, in 1525, the French cartographer Jean Fernel confirmed the accuracy of Eratosthenes' figures—by almost equally primitive means. Fernel drove from Paris to Amiens and measured the distance between by counting the revolutions of a carriage wheel. Then, using this distance and a geometrical calculation based on sun sights at both places, he was able to compute the length of a degree and thus the size of the earth. Like Eratosthenes, Fernel made errors, but in both cases the errors canceled themselves out and the results were remarkably accurate.

Many of the basic principles of measurement and mapmaking were developed long before the technology to practice them was available. Ptolemy figured out how to locate a place by determining its latitude and longitude, but even as late as the middle of the eighteenth century only 116 places on earth had been correctly located by astronomical observation. Techniques of telling time, of travel and of celestial measurement were still too unsophisticated to keep up with the theories.

Nowadays, scientists measure the earth using quasars for computing triangulation, or special satellites that reflect laser beams from the earth. The results are rather more precise than necessary for determining the location of, say, Philadelphia, but invaluable for scientists trying to measure the movements of the earth's crustal plates. Mapmaking has come a long way. We've charted the sea floors and discovered in the process a ridge of mountains higher than the Himalayas running through all the major oceans. We've mapped the region below the surface of the earth—a place of particular interest to oil companies. Before the first astronauts had set foot on the moon's dusty surface, cartographers had charted it, front and back. And the mapping of Mars is well under way. (The legendary canals, sad to say, turn out to be a figment of an overeager astronomer's imagination.)

Still, there's plenty to be done—not only the whole rest of the universe but, right here at home, a complete and uniform map of the earth itself. A project for an International Map of the World, on a scale of one to a million—what cartographers call the Millionth Map—was proposed in 1891. It took until 1913 for the participating nations to agree on a set of standards, and progress since then hasn't been any more rapid. Today the United Nations is coordinating the effort. It recently reported that, because of "inadequate surveys and outdated information," many of the sheets already published were unacceptable. Other large sections of the world—about half of it, the report said—hadn't yet been begun. Whether this grand project is ever completed or not, it is a remarkable, global manifestation of what Wilford calls "the ageless compulsion to reach out and, through mapping's ever-widening embrace . . . to reduce wonder to a scale more susceptible of human comprehension." □

NEXT WEEK
SPRING BOOKS ISSUE

'Microcosmographia Academica'

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

It is not every day that *Newsweek* carries a report with pictures on a quarrel within an English university faculty. And even though most publications seem unable to cover Cambridge without reference to C.P. Snow, Malcolm Bradbury, ivy-infested colleges and port-sodden dons, such coverage at least recognizes the importance of the issue. Hardly a major English studies department in the English-speaking world has not been affected in some manner by the idea of "Cambridge English." It is a school that takes itself extremely seriously, having the responsibility, in the words of one of its epigones, "to teach and uphold the canon of English literature." The liturgical note of that remark is by no means accidental; Matthew Arnold, after all, felt that English literature could take the place of religion as the key discipline. Recent efforts to contest the new illiteracy have taken Cambridge as their standard—the glass of fashion and the mold of form. So the recent dispute there, with its revelations of corruption and incompetence, is more than a merely academic squabble.

The core issue can be stated very simply. A very bright and energetic young don, Colin MacCabe, was recently refused tenure after completing what are normally seen as all the necessary requirements for it. His faculty allies, among them Profs. Raymond Williams and Frank Kermode, have said publicly that they think MacCabe was victimized for his spiky opinions and for his efforts to incorporate the methods of structuralism into the Cambridge curriculum—scarcely the doom of civilized letters. They also say that the whole faculty stands in dire need of reform. Against them are ranged the allies of Prof. Christopher Ricks (author of important studies of Keats and Tennyson) whose political skills kept MacCabe away from full tenure.

It is important to distinguish between the strictly local aspects of the dispute and the wider implications of a font of English polluted. Many years ago, F.M. Cornford wrote a satire on Cambridge politics entitled *Microcosmographia Academica*. He was writing before World War I, as a liberal classicist more than half in love with the place, who feared that it would die because it was impervious to change. His witty polemic reads very well today, because the issue remains: Can Cambridge assimilate new ideas, or has it become insular and protective?

Cambridge acquired its standing by being very open to refreshment from outside. The mandarins who now guard English so jealously from dilution would be surprised if they knew the history. In the early years of the faculty, anthropology was ransacked in pursuit

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of insights into the study of Tragedy. In the 1920s, I.A. Richards, usually credited as a "founding father" of the school, employed modern psychology in the study of how people read texts. He ran lecture-room experiments in practical criticism where students were made to analyze material stripped of all evidence of period or authority. He formed a distinction between "symbolic" language use in science and "emotive" use in poetry, thus enhancing the role of semantics. Similarly, F. R. Leavis and his wife, Queenie, were not afraid to step over the bounds of the accepted "English canon." In *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture* and *Fiction and the Reading Public*, they submitted popular culture to careful scrutiny and came up with implications for literature.

MacCabe has hardly been so bold. But he has come up against a Cambridge far more cramped and far less confident of its own integrity. Like George Steiner before him, he has tried to interest students in the "structuralism" of Ferdinand de Saussure and Jacques Lacan. Like Steiner before him, he has been frozen out by the faculty (Steiner now teaches in exile at the University of Geneva, de Saussure's old hometown). Approaches and disciplines considered commonplace in most European universities are now felt to be menacing and *farouche* at Cambridge.

It is sadly true that Cambridge has always suffered from an undercurrent of chauvinism. In the years when the Tripos in English was being designed (just after World War I), philology suffered for being a "German subject," and two great German scholars, Breul and Braunholtz, were effectively removed from the faculty. Even today, American literature is only taught by one teacher on a part-time basis. So the reception accorded to the "French" notions of semiology and structuralism can be imagined.

Cornford would have understood this rancor. He would also have expected it to have severe institutional results. In a debate in the Cambridge Senate in January, called especially to discuss this matter, it emerged that:

§ English at Cambridge has no central teaching faculty, unlike every other subject.

§ The collegiate system admits students to read English without consulting the faculty board. At least one college has no English don at all.

§ The faculty often does not know how many students it has in any given year.

§ No teacher is obliged to examine, and a lecturer can in principle fulfill his teaching obligation by offering forty lectures a year.

§ In 1976, for the second time in a decade, the faculty board of English vetoed further discussion of reform, either in the Tripos itself or in the method of teaching it.

In the course of the debate, Professor Kermode (a former editor of *Encounter* and no radical) said:

> I have, over the years, sat on too many committees, academic and otherwise, to have any other opinion of the Board of the Faculty of English than that it is extraordinarily longwinded and extraordinarily inept. It is so far from being an effective instrument of administration that it would be fairer to describe it as a forum for the display of stubborn self-regard, and occasionally as an instrument of mischief.

He added that the colleges seldom arranged teaching well and that some of them "discharge it with a casualness that would seem, in any other institution, nothing less than astonishing." And he was in no doubt that MacCabe had been made a sacrifice for these failures and omissions, describing him as "the scapegoat for a corporate guilt." Kermode and Williams's arch-opponent, Ricks, did not deign to speak at this Senate meeting, and has in fact avoided all public discussion of the case from its inception.

F. M. Cornford can, perhaps, now speak for himself. He knew, as anyone who knows university politics knows, that the aspirant young will often suffer in this way. (By a hideous irony, his own impatient son, Julian, poet of the 1930s, lost his life in the Spanish Civil War.) Cornford *père* wrote in 1908:

> The Young Man in a Hurry is a narrow-minded and ridiculously youthful prig, who is inexperienced enough to imagine that something might be done before long, and even to suggest definite things. His most dangerous defect being want of experience, everything should be done to prevent him from taking any part in affairs.

Unfortunately for the ruling conservative faction, it has not proved possible to crush the upstart MacCabe alone. In order to remove him, it was necessary to displace both Williams and Kermode from the appointments committee. Thus, one of the key faculty bodies, in a faculty with no less than six professors, now has no professor sitting on it at all. This more or less guarantees that the MacCabe affair will not be a short-lived one. It has been noised about that there are developments in literary theory which are novel and fertile, and that Cambridge is refusing to expose its students to them. Such a situation, of being half-taught and half-blinkered, cannot long endure.

In a way, it is amazing that it has endured so long. For years the faculty fought against the admission of Leavis to a full-time teaching role. For years they kept Steiner at arm's length. For years they lived on their ancient reputation, taking in *arrivistes* like Norman Podhoretz, who wrote, with his usual rebarbative candor:

> A Cambridge B.A. was a good investment for anyone who meant to pursue an academic career in America, not only because of the prestige attached to it, and not only because it automatically "matured" into an M.A. after a certain number

This Passover or the Next I will Never be in Jerusalem

by Hilton Obenzinger

batiks by Lisa Kokin

In a vivid sequence of poems, stories and interviews, Hilton Obenzinger has built a powerful exploration into the roots and issues of Jewish identity in America.

...This book raises all the questions I grew up with—questions about the validity of Zionism, about personal and social responsibility, and the whole validity of the mythology of chosenness. I hope many people will read it though I am also rather afraid that Obenzinger will be cast from the temple rather than educate it.
—Herb Kohl

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> of years, but also because having it would open the way to a Ph.D. at Cambridge, where the requirements were much less onerous than in America itself. . . . Such, at any rate, was the myth which, fortunately for me, I bought.

A good university and a good department must, let us all agree, do more than provide academic cover for the likes of Podhoretz. Like the language, English teaching must be sensitive to new usage without fawning on each new trend. If it is to be a repository and a censor, it must know what is going on. Ricks, whose critical writing on the lyrics of Bob Dylan is a delicious torment of embarrassment, seems implicitly to concede this. But the debilitated condition of the faculty and college system, as well as the menace of the Parisian Left Bank, has made him lose his nerve and form a block with the most traditional elements. The losers are *(a)* the wretched students whose teaching has been spoiled and disrupted; *(b)* the forces who are trying to defend university standards against Thatcher's budget cuts; and *(c)* those who care about the state of our language and its intimate but complex relationship with democracy.

English was held by Leavis to be "the specially sensitive register" of all social criticism and of all other disciplines. The hegemony of English over history, law, other languages, psychology and the classics has been unchallenged for a considerable time. The structuralists do not seek to invert this relationship, but they do propose to submit it, as Richards did, to some critical investigation and experiment. In this they act within the best of the real Cambridge tradition. Let Cornford have the last word:

> Hence, learning is called sound when no one has ever heard of it; and "sound scholar" is a term of praise applied to one another by learned men who have no reputation outside the university, and a rather queer one inside it. If you should write a book (you had better not), be sure that it is unreadable; otherwise you will be called "brilliant" and forfeit all respect. . . .
>
> Every public action which is not customary, either is wrong, or, if it is right, is a dangerous precedent. It follows that nothing should ever be done for the first time. □

A New Thesaurus, See Paltry

MITCH TUCHMAN

ROGET'S II: THE NEW THESAURUS. *Edited by the editors of* The American Heritage Dictionary. *Houghton Mifflin Company. 1,072 pp. $10.95.*

Were it not for the synonyms of *red*, there would be no St. Louis Cardinals, no Rosie the Riveter, no *Harvard Crimson* or strawberry roans; no *Ruby Gentry* or *Puce Moment*; no Scarlett O'Hara or the derivative Vermilion O'Toole (Ann Sheridan in *Take Me to Town*). True, Vermilion pales beside Scarlett, but then synonymy is not identity. Vermilion is not scarlet, and neither one is really red. Their status as synonyms depends as much on the metaphorical richness of blood and flame as on neighboring chromatic frequencies. "It is hardly possible," Peter Mark Roget observed in the introduction to his thesaurus (1852), "to find two words having in all respects the same meaning, and being therefore interchangeable." Synonymy, then, is not equivalence but correspondence born of customary usage.

Roget, son of a Protestant minister and protégé of utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham, was himself a comparative physiologist active "in the midst of an age of classifiers [for whom]," writes his biographer D. L. Emblen, "Linnaeus was a demigod." At 73, Roget "classified and arranged" his treasury of words and phrases in the manner of contemporary botanists and zoologists, by the "phyla" of human knowledge: abstract relations, space, matter, intellect, volition, sentiment and moral powers. It was not intended for the writer with a given word seeking its definition but for the writer with a given idea seeking its most apt expression.

As recent an editor as Robert L. Chapman, who singlehandedly revised the standard *Roget's International Thesaurus* (Thomas Y. Crowell, 1977), found the major categories still serviceable. "Roget's empirical bent," he wrote in *Language Sciences* (1974), "led him to construct and adjust his system on the basis of lexical fact rather than logical rigor." The Crowell company, having acquired the property prior to the institution of international copyright laws, has published American editions for a century, adding only two new classes—physics and sensation—in order to accommodate scientific neologisms.

Last November the editors of *American Heritage* published a competing volume, *Roget's II: The New Thesaurus*, replacing Roget's classificatory arrangement of ideas with alphabetically arranged word entries; brief, generally colorless definitions (adapted from *The American Heritage Dictionary*); and illustrative sentences and sentence fragments. Supervising editor Anne Steinhart, who selected the words to be synonymized, dismisses Roget's system as "cumbersome": "There are various ways of segmenting the world, and his was one."

Dictionary-style hybrids such as *Roget's II* answer the immediate, desperate need for one word—synonymy in its most paltry sense—but at the cost of rescinding Roget's invitation to tarry before "a whole vista of collateral ideas, which could not, without an extended and obtrusive episode, have been unfolded to [the writer's] view." The breadth of that vista is a mark of a thesaurus's quality as an account of actual usage. What passes for synonymy in any era is an indicator of cultural change, as comparison of entries in four editions—three Crowells (1922, 1946 and 1977) and *Roget's II*—illustrates.

Feminism/feminist. Crowell 1922—"Bachelor girl, new woman, suffragist, suffragette; spinster, old maid." This brief paragraph, classified Matter/Organic/Woman, cedes recognition to the efforts of maiden ladies to secure the vote.

Crowell 1946—"Feminism, womanism, woman's or women's rights . . . woman or female suffrage, suffragettism; emancipation of women"; also "feminist, womanist, suffragist, suffragette." These synonyms, without reference to marital status, still evoke white-frocked picketers but with more abstract demands.

Crowell 1977—Reclassified, "women's rights" appear second only to civil rights under Affections/Morality/Rights: "Feminism, women's liberation, women's lib [informal], women's liberation movement, sisterhood." The impression, while less colorful, is more

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catholic than before. *Sisterhood* suggests a transcendence of social class among women; the reclassification itself suggests that an interest in feminism transcends gender, too.

There is no entry for feminism in *Roget's II*; no entries for women's rights, liberation, or movement, for sisterhood or suffrage. There are several ambiguous definitions for *femininity*: first, "the quality or condition of being feminine: *a woman whose attitude and appearance projected true femininity*"; second, "women in general: *laws disadvantageous to femininity*." Synonyms for the latter include the idiom "the fair (or weaker) sex."

Democracy/democratic. Crowell 1922 and subsequent editions suggest a political system that is part Jackson (commonality) and part Lincoln (self-determination): "Democracy . . . mass of the people . . . Tom, Dick, and Harry . . . lower-, humbler- -classes, -orders" and "representative government, constitutional government, *vox populi* . . . self-government, autonomy, self-determination; republicanism, federalism. . . ." Early Crowells classified democracy under the stalwart and encompassing abstraction Authority. By 1977, with fewer extant autocracies, fewer captains of industry and more wars of national liberation, government was distinguished from authority among the subclasses of Intersocial Volition, and democracy was shifted. Happily, it also was added to Participation, reflecting, perhaps, changing notions in the wake of 1960s activism.

Democracy does not appear in *Roget's II*. Democratic does. See *popular*. Popular: "Of, representing, or carried on by people at large": that is, Lincoln, yes; Jackson, no.

Property. Crowell—The principal aspects of the Possessive Relation known as property are chattels and tenure. Synonyms have remained relatively constant.

Roget's II—Property: see *holdings*. Holdings: "Something, as land and assets, legally possessed: *The company has vast holdings in South Africa.*"

Copulation/copulate. Over the years Crowell has humanized copulation from an Abstract Relation/Junction (much clinical talk and some now-archaic slang—*niggle, jazz*) to an Organic Matter/Sex (a far more extensive list of formal nouns and verbs and copious updated slang terms—*screw, ball, meat, ass*—from which the most common is conspicuously absent.

Roget's II refers readers curious about copulation to *take*, and if you've got the gist by now, you can guess who takes and who gets taken: *"Abraham took his slave girl."*

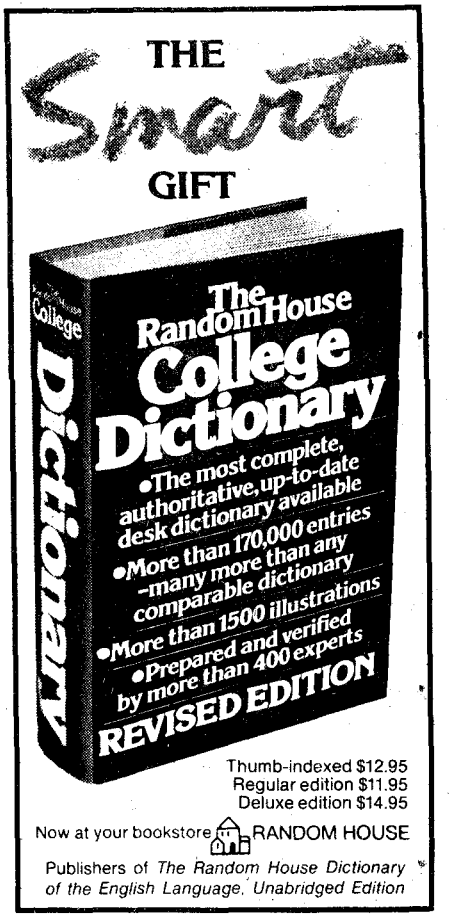
Editor Steinhart maintains that concrete terms are not especially productive of synonyms. A chair is not a sofa or a bench. Vermilion is not scarlet. She chose words or senses of words having enough synonyms to make their inclusion worthwhile. In general, she avoided specialized vocabularies: "The lexicon of politics is a little world of its own." The terms richest in synonyms in *Roget's II*, she confided, are pejorative: *crazy, drunk, ill-tempered.*

Despite her guidelines, the volume is rife with anomalies. In the matter of senses productive of numerous synonyms: why include *aboriginal* in the sense of native, but not in the sense of primitive; *absurd* as foolish, but not as unthinkable; *adieu* as parting, but not as the expletive *farewell*; *cleave* as divide, but not as adhere; *dense* as stupid, but not as impenetrable; *file* as queue, but not as dossier? For *accustomed*, why the synonyms chronic, habitual and routine along with the illustrative phrase, "*crickets making their accustomed noises,*" where accustomed means characteristic? At best, this is ambiguous; at worst, inaccurate.

Why include *absolutism* (not to mention *absolutist* and *absolutistic*) but omit democracy; why *bottomless* but not *topless*; why *formicate* but not *fornicate*?

Is a capitalist merely "[o]ne who is occupied with or expert in large-scale financial affairs"?

A user, to find his *mot juste* in "Roget's I," consults either the classification table in the front or the alphabetical index in the back for direction to the proper paragraph in the main text. Each sense of a word requires a new effort. Because of the "breakthrough in thesaurus design" that *Roget's II* represents, a user presumably locates the desired synonym simply by reference to an approximation listed in the alphabetically arranged text. In fact, this is seldom the case. More often than not the user is directed to a second location. Of twenty-three entries on page 1, only seven are synonymized there; sixteen require turning pages. Of thirty-three entries on page 24, one is synonymized; of thirty-eight on page 291, none is. On pages 118-119, the verb *bring*, a principal entry, is followed by a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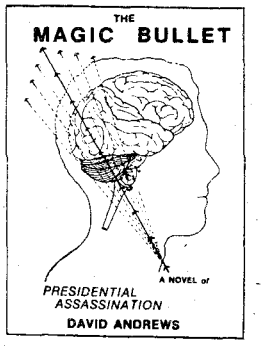

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list of nine subentries: *bring about, bring around, bring down, bring forth* and so on, some with several senses and all but one requiring a further search for synonyms. This list is followed immediately by an identical list of nine compounds of bring, each requesting the user to begin the process all over again. The breakthrough in simplified thesaurus design is the portrait of a Gorgon.

Crowell 1977 is a remarkable volume: humane, bountiful and up-to-date. *Roget's II* is bloodless, exiguous and reactionary. A fitting protest would be the rejection of its expropriation of the name Roget as a synonym for *thesaurus.* □

Bildungsroman Times Five

JOHN ALFRED AVANT

ORIGINAL SINS. *By Lisa Alther. Alfred A. Knopf. 608 pp. $13.95.*

Original Sins is several novels in one bulky package. Following a prologue set in 1955 with an Eden image—five youngsters in their hideout in a weeping beech tree dreaming of the future—Lisa Alther gives us Southern rites of passage ironically treated: pep rally, Sadie Hawkins dance, cheerleader clinic, beauty pageant, minstrel show, some church services. After her characters have graduated from high school or dropped out to get married, she takes up a new structure and presents each of her five major characters separately, at certain points in their lives, bringing you up to date through flashbacks. This done, she pursues the histories in the same order. In the epilogue, one of the principals has died, the other four meet after the funeral, while their five children look down on them from the weeping beech tree, feeling superior.

The five characters, children of the New South, fit into familiar scenarios. Emily and Sally Prince are privileged white girls from the family that founded the cotton mill, the sustaining industry of Newland, Tennessee. Raymond and Jed Tatro are sons of a mill foreman, grandsons of coal miners in the nearby Kentucky mountains. The obligatory black, Donny Tatro, a distant, unacknowledged cousin of Raymond and Jed, is raised by his grandmother who keeps house for the Princes.

The novel is a *Bildungsroman* times five, showing how The Five (their childhood club name) learn that life is different from what they were taught it would be. Alther's earlier work, *Kinflicks*—a novel that seemed to be writing itself in your head while you read—was picaresque, a woman's trip up the road with deliriously funny, sexy encounters. Ginny Babcock, the privileged white Southern heroine, wandered through the story responding with a slightly dazed "Who, me?" double take to the benign monsters, complex libidinous figures of both sexes, who tried to make her and often succeeded. The tone was loose and spontaneous except for the juxtaposed chapters that dealt with the mother's slow hospital death. There Alther did use her laborious accumulation of medical data to suggest age and pain and waste.

Yet *Kinflicks*, a long novel that went by like an evening's giddy dancing with occasional slow stretches, didn't completely satisfy. Alther was unable to make Ginny's coming to consciousness convincing. The novel just wound down, as though Ginny had nothing more to tell us until she'd thought a few things out. There was one shocking episode: Ginny's lesbian lover was decapitated when the snowmobile she was driving intersected a stretched line of barbed wire, and the woman's head bounced over the frozen pond while Ginny and the man she would subsequently marry watched, dumbstruck. Alther didn't resolve the horror; she just moved along to the next scene. She's a good teller of tall tales.

In *Original Sins*, the stories set forth a succession of easy ironies. When The Five go to a movie theater as children and Donny has to sit upstairs in the colored section, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is played before the movie starts. At a Plantation Ball held just before the civil rights bill is passed in 1964, the emcee pays homage to "our Southern way of life" while a white-jacketed Donny, hired to play the darky serving punch, stands resentfully. After Raymond has gone to visit his "hillbilly" grandparents, just about the only people he knows who seem in touch with their lives, he's back home with his own parents, who are watching *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Northern male activists, who had been contemptuous of white Southerners in the late 1960s, are rejected for their sexist attitudes by female activists in the 1970s.

Alther tells us that everyone's conditioning is inadequate and that being Southern is a particular handicap: the original sin. They try to attain a state of redemption, and since they've started out flawed, it's hard, in most cases hopeless. The Eden theme, witty in its way, is limited to prologue and epilogue. In between is a turgid narrative, meant to have the epic sweep of an Edna Ferber novel, only the author has no idea how to bring it off. Alther is earnest and moribund, doggedly trying to work out what she thinks has to go into this novel: Tennessee valleys, cotton mill machinery, Upper West Side apartments, feminist consciousness-raising sessions, voter registration drives, Black Panther meetings and Southern race riots. The panorama is static; the scenes are friezes, illustrating what the characters have failed to learn and how unaware they'll be at the next stage.

Alther is naïvely didactic, explaining the meaning of everything, preparing us for every step. When someone mentions the Plantation Ball, we sense that an upcoming chapter will be entitled "The Plantation Ball." When Emily falls in love with a lesbian separatist, we've been cued to this self-discovery hundreds of pages earlier, by Emily's response to an encounter after gym class with a sexually repressed physical education teacher: "She reached out and touched Emily's shoulder with her fingertips. A shiver ran down Emily's back." The New York lesbians and activists seem to be waiting around for Marge Piercy to breathe some life into them. The Southerners are familiar types from other novels by transplanted Southerners, telling us what it was like to grow up back home.

In her eagerness to tell it all, Lisa Alther has forgotten everything she knew about unobtrusive prose. She throws us out of the novel again and again with glaring metaphors—"The fury drained away quickly, like air out of a bicycle tire"—and with sex/nature rhapsodies—"Afterward they lay in each other's arms and watched the long pale fingers of dawn gently stroke the night sky until the grey became engorged with crimson." It's hard to believe this is the same novelist who in *Kinflicks* could describe a hallucinogen-induced trip without fragmenting the narrative

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line, while writing a scene that advanced the plot, something not even Robert Stone in *Dog Soldiers* brought off as well.

When *Kinflicks* came out five years ago, I thought Alther, with her gift for action scenes and her light, sassy prose, might go on to write a female version of *The Unvanquished*. In his humorous tales, Faulkner knew how not to *seem* to take himself seriously. *Original Sins* keeps dumping on Southern values, then drawing up defensively against criticism Alther posits from outside the South. Thus, the novel is stiff, gaseous. Lisa Alther wants to be funny, but she feels the need to preach. Her sound and fury tell us nothing. □

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

The Father

The Father isn't one of August Strindberg's most invulnerable pieces of theater, but its writing was a decisive act, marking as it did an acute turning point in his career and prefiguring almost all of what he would later realize more fully. Before it, his dramatic writing had been mostly romantic tragedies in a largely derivative vein. He had, in fact, written no plays at all during the previous three or four years, a period when he described the stage as "reprehensible" for its resistance to the kinds of new consciousness that fiction and poetry had long since begun to assimilate and express.

But something had been taking shape in Strindberg, an adventure of sensibility. In 1886 he had completed an autobiographical novel, *A Madman's Defense*, which he described as "an analysis of the soul, psychological anatomy." Then early the next year he wrote to a friend that he had invented a new dramatic genre, "the battle of the brains." *The Father*, he went on without the slightest slip into false modesty, "is the realization of modern drama and as such is something very curious. Very curious because the struggle takes place between souls. It is . . . not a dagger fight or poisoning with raspberry juice as in *The Robbers*. The French of today are still seeking the formula, but I have found it."

What he had found, of course, wasn't a formula but a new dramatic subject and procedure, which he was to take even further a few months later with *Miss Julie* and much further still in the dream and chamber plays of his richest periods. *The Father* is enshrined in the textbooks as Strindberg's first "naturalistic" play, but the term is one of those misleading appellations with which cultural history is filled. For no sooner had Strindberg been described as a naturalist than he repudiated the word, calling himself instead a *nynaturalist*, a "new" one—a writer with different aims, and consequently different methods, from those of the quasi-official movement.

The realm *The Father* enters isn't sociological but psychological and personal (a number of lines and speeches are taken directly from *A Madman's Defense*); yet the psychic materials, extreme and turbulent, are used for no sort of clinical investigation or portraiture, either of a doomed marriage or of the larger reality of conventional sexual warfare. For the captain's obsession with whether or not he is biologically his daughter's father and his battle with his wife over the girl's soul are the occasions for the play, not its subject; they're the thematic planks on which the deeper, more mysterious drama can be erected. And this drama goes past the questions of sexual legitimacy and marital strife to the question of existence

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itself, the ultimate unknowability of human motives and desires, the terrifying strangeness of the "other." That sexual differentiation is otherness in its most profound form was precisely to Strindberg's purpose; in the largest sense his "illness" was less his famous misogyny than a furious, exacerbated dream of exposing all the world's erotic secrets.

The Father is a difficult play to stage well, in part because of its unruly emotional substance and in part because Strindberg had not yet mastered his new methods, his "formula." To put it briefly, this consisted in an abandonment of progressive, linear plot; a perspective on human motivation that saw it as multiple instead of unitary; and—as he expressed it in his preface to *Miss Julie*, the play in which the new procedures would fully flower—the avoidance "of the symmetrical, mathematical constructions of French dialogue" in favor of allowing his characters' "minds [to] work irregularly, as they do in real life." In *The Father* these departures from conventional dramaturgy were incomplete and not fully integrated into the play's thematic structure.

For all that, this important work can be done a good deal better than the Circle in the Square is doing it. Blame for a production as lacking in heat and distinctiveness, as flat and unevocative as this one, is usually diffuse, spread among many elements of the enterprise. But that isn't the case here. There's nothing flagrantly wrong with the direction by Göran Graffman, a Swedish actor-director with wide experience in modern classics. He has no radical "concept" to impose on the text and his clean style lets the latter speak. The set is spare and works well. And the players, for the most part, are up to their tasks. Frances Sternhagen always troubles me a little with her Anglicized diction, pitched somewhere in mid-Atlantic, but she plays the wife with force and precision. And Pauline Flanagan, that good veteran, is really fine in the small but central part of the old nurse.

But for *The Father* to be staged without an actor in the title role makes for a rather large handicap. I don't know what Ralph Waite is thought by others to be (factually, of course, he has for years played the patriarch of the Walton family on television: play one father, play them all) but he isn't an actor in any way I recognize. He exhibits no understanding of the text. He enters into no transactions, emotional or otherwise, with the other members of the cast. He seems to obey wholly arbitrary principles of timing, gesture and facial expression and, in short, offers a performance which instead of developing merely begins and then, an hour and a half and a great many characterless pieces of action later, ends.

Since the captain is on stage most of the time and during all the crucial scenes, and since he is the locus of all the play's significances and tonalities, Waite's presence is a continuous fatality. There ought to be a slowly accumulating sense of terror and despair, the weaving of a thick texture of spiritual entrapment, but there is only a thin skin of menace, a murky atmosphere of disaster for whose understanding one has perpetually to return to a memory of the text before this incarnation. It's difficult to imagine what those spectators who come without such knowledge but with good will can possibly make of it all. □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Atlantic City
From Mao to Mozart

Louis Malle does not confide in me and it is a little dangerous to speculate on the springs of a director's imagination. Nevertheless I will guess that the idea for *Atlantic City* was conceived when Malle decided he could make a film star of that superbly situated, enticingly amoral resort, which for almost exactly 100 years (the Boardwalk was built in 1880) has boomed and busted and proved to have more lives than a cat. My hunch is supported, I think, by two emblematic shots that appear early in the film. The first is a view of the absurd cement elephant (as tall at the shoulder, I recall, as a two-story cottage) that used to be our preferred destination for a stroll on the Boardwalk, and which still survives. The second is the surreal sight of one of the great oceanfront hotels collapsing like a sand castle when dynamited to make elbowroom for still another casino at Las Vegas by the sea.

Having chosen his lead, if I am right, Malle turned to John Guare for a story that would display her to advantage, and the playwright (*Landscape of the Body* and *Bosoms and Neglect*, among others) responded with a script marvelously efficient for the purpose. It celebrates the flamboyantly vulgar facade of the place and carries the cameras (Richard Ciupka's department) into the peeling clapboard slums that begin, and have always begun, two blocks back from the beach. The narrative interweaves ironic nostalgia for a sleazy past with present-day visions of pots of gold made slippery by vice and violence. It abounds in heroics, glories in coincidence, indulges in sentiment, laughs at Cupid's bizarre sense of humor and provides sumptuous parts for the five leading players, who know how to seize their opportunities.

Burt Lancaster is Lou, a survivor from the days when the mobs ran Atlantic City, but now reduced—though he was never much more, whatever he remembers—to the role of companion/servant to Grace (Kate Reid). The widow of one of the capos, she is bedizened, bedridden, possessed of a strident voice and a pampered poodle. In the apartment across the air shaft lives Sally (Susan Sarandon), who plays Susanna to Lou's elderly spying. She works as a counter girl in an oyster bar and is studying to be a croupier. Into town come two threats to her career: her ex-husband Dave (Robert Joy), a plausible drifter who has for sale a considerable parcel of hijacked cocaine and who is accompanied by Sally's sister, Chrissie (Hollis McLaren), spouting zen balderdash as though the flower children had never faded, and eight months pregnant by Dave. The plot begins to spin with a satisfying hum. Before it comes to rest Dave is dead, Sally has skipped town, perhaps for Monaco, Lou has fired a pistol and bought himself a George Raft wardrobe, and Grace, cured of arthritis by the loving hands of Chrissie (now safely home in Saskatchewan), is last seen strutting along the Boardwalk on the arm of the resplendent Lou. It has been a splendid romp.

For all its extrovert breeziness, *Atlantic City* has a haunting fragrance that derives from Guare's script. It is a compilation of situations and characters found in a warehouse of old Hollywood movies, but assembled with an appreciation of their antique charm and understanding of the vitality that can be restored to them by nicety of composition and workmanship. The analogy is to one of Joseph Cornell's pensive, wit-

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ty, somewhat sinister illuminated boxes. The text is ideal for Malle, who characteristically holds himself a little distant from his subject matter, keeping his own counsel as to the emotions, associations and values it may evoke. This manner lends his work a stillness, a sense of time suspended, that is gently beautiful, but can at times—as especially in *Murmur of the Heart* and *Pretty Baby*—seem disconcertingly uninvolved.

But that reservation does not arise with *Atlantic City*. It is Malle's comedy of manners, its touch too light to bruise. It grins at the follies it has conjured up and, all but one, lets the scamps go their heedless ways.

From Mao to Mozart (a title that has only alliteration to recommend it) is an account of Isaac Stern's recent working vacation in China. Produced and directed by Murray Lerner, it was given an Oscar, which it abundantly deserved, at last month's Academy festivities.

Stern traveled with his family and David Golub, the pianist. Ravishing views of China's rivers, farmlands and mountains, taken for the most part from train windows, suggest that they were energetic tourists. Oddly enough, however, I cannot recall seeing any member of the party in these shots. In any case, the subject of the documentary is Stern's encounters with the performers, teachers and students of Western classical music in Peking and Shanghai. These episodes are electrifying, as one might perhaps expect.

Stern is not only one of the most eminent violinists of his day; he is also possessed of a personality as inspiriting as a flourish of trumpets. The mere sight of a human being causes him to glow with pleasure, as though he were encountering this marvel of nature for the first time. He responds to everyone—man or woman, old or (particularly) young—with total, appreciative attention. He is an inveterate embracer. And it is no news that the Chinese are the world's most generously enthusiastic hosts.

During the visit, Stern rehearsed and played with a small symphony orchestra, gave concerts with Golub, talked with members of the conservatory faculties in both cities, worked with a number of students ranging in age from 9 or 10 to the late teens and early 20s. I was inclined at first to be suspicious of the teaching sessions; they were so clear and so gratifyingly effective as to suggest prearrangement. However, I put aside this sour notion. After all, these students were bright, or their teachers would not have called them forward. And Stern is an incisive critic. He is quick to spot what he wants to correct and ingenious in his ways of conveying an instruction: eloquent with his own violin, often using humor to drive home a point, frankly critical but generous with praise when the idea he is advancing takes hold.

I wondered also if the single, very brief encounters with Stern could be of any permanent advantage to the aspiring musicians, but then it occurred to me that he was using a series of individual criticisms to establish a basic guide for the approach to and performance of Western music. If, as I feel sure they will, the conservatories set succeeding classes to study the film, Stern's visit may prove a lasting contribution to China's musical life. His comments are specific to each pupil, but they tend in a single direction, summed up by his comment that we don't have music in order to play the violin; we have the violin in order to play music.

Stern and his companions were taken to the school of the Peking opera; they attended classes in acrobatics and gymnastics; they watched sword dances and Ping-Pong contests. In all these pursuits the dedication to perfection, the speed and pyrotechnic facility of the Chinese are marvelous to the point of bewilderment. Stern and company were shown the very best, of course, but one gets the impression that China is a nation of magicians.

The implications for music to be drawn from this pride of virtuosity clearly worried the American. He discussed technique with the young people, showing them tricks of the trade, adjusting their ways of handling fiddle and bow. But much more strongly he exhorted them to feel the music, to hear and love what they play. A faculty member tells him that the advanced students, hoping for good positions on graduation, vie to determine who shall be the fastest, loudest, digitally most accurate performer in the class. Stern shakes his head and redoubles his emphasis on music as language, as indeed the most eloquent form of speech. The young people seem to respond, but in that atmosphere of almost impenetrable politeness, it is difficult to be sure.

Finally, Stern's trip makes one wonder at the tremendous appetite of the Chinese for Western music. They have an ancient and splendid musical culture of their own, examples of which are heard in the film. Yet everywhere Stern and Golub performed they drew enormous, wildly enthusiastic audiences, and the schools appear to devote at least as much teaching to our music as to their own. A spokesman explained that China is determined to master the Western tradition in order to determine what can best be selected from it and combined with the native art to produce a yet richer music for generations to come. It is scarcely a new idea, except as applied to music; the Chinese take much the same view of every aspect of Western life. They see themselves as the dominant civilization of the future, the first that will synthesize the genius of both East and West. They believe they have the numbers, the intelligence, the energy and the will to prevail. I have been thinking for some time that they may well be right. □

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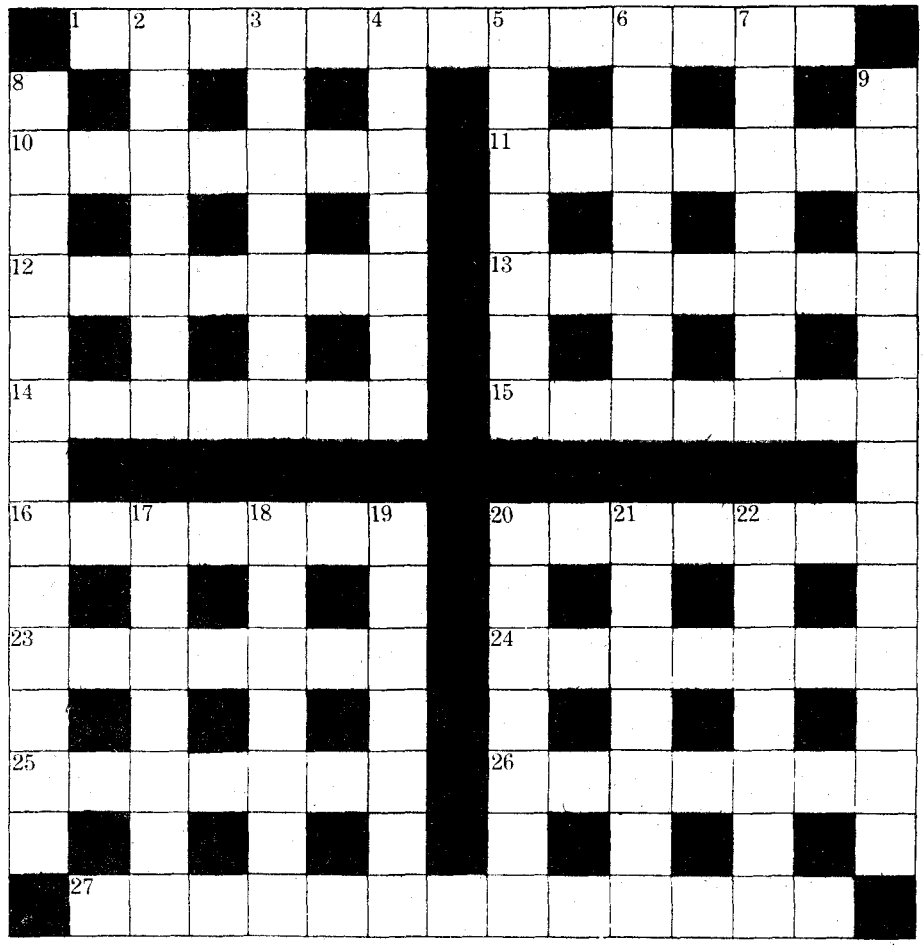
T	H	E	L	O	R	D	■	S	P	R	A	Y	E	R
W	■	D	■	P	■	O	■	T	■	T	■	E	■	L
A	S	S	E	S	■	W	E	A	T	H	E	R	E	D
T	■	■	■	K	■	N	■	T	■	■	■	C	■	S
E	L	E	M	I	■	S	P	E	C	T	R	A	L	■
R	■	A	■	R	■	■	■	■	■	H	■	K	■	P
■	A	S	I	T	W	E	R	E	■	R	E	E	V	E
B	■	Y	■	■	■	S	■	X	■	O	■	■	■	R
O	R	G	A	N	S	T	O	P	■	W	O	R	M	S
T	■	O	■	O	■	H	■	L	■	B	■	O	■	O
T	H	I	M	B	L	E	■	A	B	A	N	D	O	N
L	■	N	■	E	■	R	■	I	■	C	■	E	■	A
E	N	G	U	L	F	■	S	N	A	K	E	O	I	L

Crossword Puzzle No. 1865

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 One might not find trompe l'oeil here, but such a statement isn't particularly significant. (2,3,8)
10 One might be held for years, if one is holding his own 27. (7)
11 Oriental—possibly associated with pictures? (7)
12 Theotocopoulos has a broken leg, shaken to the core, in a way. (2,5)
13 Certainly not a false belief, but you'd never find it 1 across. (7)
14 A month to reach the far, far north, where one makes the rounds in celebration. (7)
15 and 16 Such as first and second songs suggested by the service manual? (7,7)
20 Finish an edge with taps, for example, in standard procedure. (7)
23 Sounds like the Dog Star and such things shouldn't be taken lightly. (7)
24 You might get it as a result of washing. (7)
25 Characterized by such as love and hate in overtime, perhaps, when one of those "reading and writing" things is neglected. (7)
26 If urgent, it's way out around the little military man. (7)
27 Yours probably won't be given more than once this year, like Pinter's. (8,5)

DOWN

2 You'll have no say about for example the flower arrangement. (7)
3 In the main, stop most of the heat with the power of prevention. (5,2)
4 Make only a few people overwhelmed? No, it's generally overwhelming! (7)
5 Promise on oath thus, about boiling water. (5,2)
6 He used to be writing plays, or getting up to take a position. (7)
7 Flower poet? (7)
8 A political head, rather than the archbishop! (5,8)
9 Did the old Egyptians worship what we sometimes attribute to exuberant youth? (6,7)
17 Deface a false coin? (Thanks to him, you might get the message!) (7)
18 Part of what he got, is the one you shouldn't be, if selfless. (7)
19 What British braces do? (7)
20 You can't openly do things in this. (7)
21 It sounds like "God Save the Queen!" (7)
22 Permissive line, in a way, when 10 is troubled. (7)

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>
> —*Victor Navasky,* The Nation, *Feb.14, 1981*

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> "Masquerading as prudent economizing in the interest of all Americans suffering from inflation, the Reagan budget's real purposes are ideological, aiming to shift the burden of the society ever more unfairly onto those least able to bear them."
>
> —*Editorial,* The Nation, *April 11, 1981*

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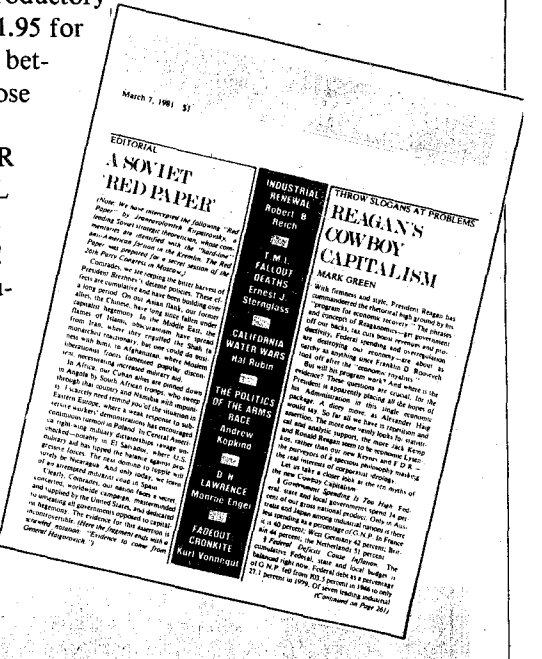
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